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The living artist

Haruhisa Handa
Edith Cowan University

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The Living Artist

A thesis presented to

The Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts

Edith Cowan University

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts (Creative Arts)

Haruhisa Handa

August 2002

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Haruhisa Handa

August 2002

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Thesis originally written in Japanese by Haruhisa Handa and translated by
Yasuo Sakamoto and Kazuhiko Kozu.

(Haruhisa Handa's religious name is Toshu Fukami.)

ABSTRACT

"The Living Artist" describes Haruhisa Handa's diverse activities in the arts as analyzed by himself. He investigates why he ventured out to learn both western and eastern styles of art, and researches what it is that truly motivates him to take on such challenging activities.

In this thesis, Handa begins with recollections and an evaluation of his own life. At present he is involved in art from a wide variety of periods and cultures including calligraphy, painting, tea ceremony, and Noh drama from Japanese culture, oil painting, composition, classical music and ballet from western culture as well as classical Chinese opera. Throughout he questions what it is that drives him into each of these areas, and returns to his elementary and junior high school days to probe for an answer. As he discusses his own history from his childhood to the present, he also analyses his own trail as a man of religion, which underpins all of his artistic ventures.

After reflecting on the past, he moves through to the present, and evaluates the influence of the Shinto religion on his artistic activities. He seeks to justify the reasons for the diverse path he has followed as both a businessman and as an artist through his understanding of Shintoism, a religion that is deeply rooted in the foundation of Japanese culture.

He continues his narrative from various points of view, and reveals the methodology through which he engages in his artistic activities as well as in his primary role as a successful businessman. In particular, he evaluates his activities as a businessman and draws comparisons to his business peers and their involvement in the arts.

Throughout the study Haruhisa Handa's arts practice is evidenced in his supplementary package of videos, CDs and monographs that are appended to this work.

Not all of Handa's activities in the arts are traditional performances or paintings; many of his projects creatively integrate religion and business. Indeed, all aspects of his life are tied together by one common factor. In this study he identifies what it is that motivates his wide-ranging artistic ventures, and in so doing reveals a unique approach to arts participation and patronage.

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CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade alone, Haruhisa Handa has donated millions to the arts and other charities. For example, in 1999 he sponsored the Australian Ballet's New York season, the Australian Chamber Orchestra on its last Tokyo tour, the annual Australian Singing Competition and the Art Gallery of Western Australia's annual Year 12 Perspectives show. His patronage in Australia reached new heights in 2002 when he opened the Australian Opera School with a \$1.4 million donation and promised to provide the Perth International Arts Festival with a \$1 million donation making him the biggest single donor ever to an Australian arts festival.

Haruhisa Handa is himself a prolific artist. From the traditional Japanese arts of Noh Theatre and calligraphy, to the Western Arts of opera, ballet and music most recently to the visual arts, Haruhisa Handa represents a unique example of a living tradition in evolution; an artist who emerged from a traditional Japanese culture to become an artist who now is generating his own tradition. (See appendix for detailed reference to his artistic activities)

Such a passion for the arts has occurred infrequently during the course of history with notable examples being the Medici family in the Western world. Living in Florence during the renaissance period, the Medici family patronized the arts and commissioned many important pieces from top artists working in various media.

However, while the underlying phenomena of arts patronage may be the same in different cultures throughout history, the physical manifestations are often quite different. Japan has a long history of philanthropy emanating from many different segments of society in different periods. From Emperor Shomu and his consort Komyo in the mid 8th century who spared no expense to build a vast temple complex (Todaiji Temple complex in Nara) for the general populace, to Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-1598), one of the three unifiers of Japan during the later 16th century who patronized the performing and visual arts to an almost unheard of extent, there has been a linking of sponsorship and participation that is fundamental to the system of traditional artistic patronage in Japan."

Patterns of patronage in Japan become clear during its own renaissance period, namely the later 15th through 16th centuries, when the class structures were loosened and various arts, including the performing arts flourished.

One early example of this type of sponsorship was Yoshimasa, the 8th Ashikaga Shogun (1436-1490). Once he retired from office as Shogun, he spent his remaining years as a patron of the arts. He built up his own collection of Chinese treasures, cataloged the 3rd Shogun Yoshimitsu's collection, hired cultural connoisseurs (doboshu) to help with his artistic program, patronized the tea ceremonies in its early form, participated in Noh drama, flower arranging and poetry as well as helped to develop a new system of architecture, called the Shoin style (one that is omni present today in traditional houses). In all of these endeavors, Yoshimasa was in some form a participant. Indeed, it was through his participation that the energy and enthusiasm for these arts spread among the populace.

One century later in the then thriving port city of Sakai, we can find the continuation of this type of patronage. However, this time the conduits were wealthy merchants like Sueya Magozaemon who practiced and propagated the arts that surround the tea ceremony which reached its age in this period with another Sakai merchant Senno Rikyu (1522-1591), who was in turn patronized by the warlord mentioned above, Toyotomi Hideyoshi.

In other words, people throughout Japanese history have patronized the arts and been active participants in them, from the Imperial family, to the daimyo (lords) like the Maeda family, to wealthy merchants and today, entrepreneurs like Haruhisa Handa are continuing that tradition. It is through their participation in these very arts, be they performative or visual, that draws popular attention to the variant art forms, and acts as a conduit for further understanding and development of the arts. It also helps attract to the field future talent through the popularizing and sponsoring of the arts.

However, in the 21st century, Haruhisa Handa stands alone as one of the world's most generous arts benefactors. What drives him to these extreme lengths? What effect will his influence have on the living traditions of those he comes into contact with?

In this thesis, Haruhisa Handa uses himself as a case study to bring some insight and meaning to this extraordinary personality.

CHAPTER TWO:

HARUHISA HANDA – THE LIVING ARTIST

At present, as well as being an artist, I am a corporate manager, a management consultant, a businessperson in the educational field, an activist in the welfare field, and a college lecturer. I am also a musician, a painter, a calligrapher, a dancer, and a flower arrangement artist. However, this does not mean that I make a living through those activities; therefore, strictly speaking, I am not a professional artist. While continuing to engage in my daily occupations, I have only been able to put my enthusiasm into artistic activities by utilizing my leisure time to that end. But I am not engaged in artistic activities with a superficial passion. Once my focus changes from daily business to the artistic world, I am absorbed in learning the techniques, and I have worked hard to come as close to the essence of the arts as possible, so that my efforts might be fully rewarded. In fact, I was granted a license as a master of Urasenke¹ for the tea ceremony², from Daito Bunka University³ for calligraphy⁴, from Hoshoryu⁵ for Noh plays⁶, and from Sagaonryu⁷ for the art of flower arrangement⁸. Regardless of the field, it is a very happy event for me when my endeavours are rewarded in one form or another. In the coming years, I want to continue, more than ever, devoting myself to those artistic activities.

By the way, I described my past achievements in artistic activities in the attached list. As you may notice looking at this list, the genres of art that I am engaged in are extremely diverse. Besides the Japanese traditional arts, such as calligraphy, Japanese painting, tea ceremony, and Noh plays, I am currently tackling classical Chinese opera⁹ (which is a traditional Chinese art), enjoying ballet, opera and orchestra (which can be seen as the quintessence of the European theatre), together with art, and oil painting. To summarize, I have started to take on most of the ancient and modern, and the Eastern and Western arts that boast of their

¹ One of the three tea ceremony schools started by Sen-no-Rikyu.

² A course for refining spirits through the art of ceremonial tea-making and pursuing the social intercourse etiquette. During the Muromachi Period in Japan (1392~1573), Murata Shuko began this ceremony, which was succeeded by Takeno Sho-o and subsequently completed by Sen-no-Rikyu. Rikyu absorbed the spirit of Zen Buddhism and spread the tea, attaching importance to the taste for simplicity and quietness. Rikyu's family was later divided into three families, individually called "Omote Senke," "Ura Senke," and "Mushanokoji Senke," and these families have disseminated tea ceremony of their own. However, there are many other tea ceremony schools.

³ A four-year university in Tokyo. Well-known for excellence in calligraphy and Chinese literature studies.

⁴ Art to skillfully write characters, using writing brushes. It stemmed from China.

⁵ A Noh school.

⁶ A Japanese classical performing art. It originated in the Heian Period in Japan (794~1185), and it was formally established in the Kamakura Period (1185~1333). Currently, there are several schools, such as Kanze, Hoshō, Konparu, Kongo, and Kita.

⁷ A flower arrangement school that has been handed down to Daigakuji Temple in Kyoto, which was a remote palace of Emperor Saga.

⁸ Techniques to cut tree branches, flowering plants, and the like, arrange them in vases, and appreciate their beauty/impression. Also, the course to refine oneself through these techniques.

⁹ A representative classic theatrical art in China. It consists of musical dramas, based on singing by actors and characterized by stylish actions and speech, active fighting behaviors, and animated, changing instrumental music. Originated in Beijing during the Ching dynasty (1616~1912).

long traditions. Once people are acquainted with my attitude of making an effort in terms of the arts, many of them seem to think, "Why do you do that to such an extent?" For foreign people especially, what I have done seems to be beyond their understanding. Whenever they find out what I have taken on, they repeatedly ask me, "Why?"

I would like to explain what drives me to my artistic activities, including why I have engaged in such a wide range of them, and why I will continue to be involved in artistic activities in the coming years.

For that purpose, it is necessary, first, to mention that I am a Shintoist¹⁰. The reason is that the base of my artistic activities lies in Shinto, the traditional religion of Japan. Before speaking of this, however, I would like to look back on the first half of my life, to reveal the secret as to what kind of human life eventually created the me of the present day.

The Account of My Half Life

Elementary and Junior High School Days

As explained above, I am challenging old and present traditional arts in eastern and western worlds, such as calligraphy, Japanese paintings, tea ceremony, Noh, European-style paintings, ballet and Peking Opera. Recently, I also started learning fashion-related arts. Namely, I challenged the "design picture contest" held by the Ministry of Education,¹¹ which is generally considered the gateway to success as a fashion designer, and I won second place among the total participation items of about 5,000. I am even thinking of such an audacious plan as participating in the Paris Collection next year. In view of me being this way, many people think I must have been engaged in artistic activities since I was extremely young, but the fact was far from it. When I was a child, I was nothing but a very commonplace boy having no relationship with the arts. I did not even receive piano lessons or hold a paintbrush. Of course, I had nothing to do with Japanese-style dancing or ballet. Regarding the arts, I only belonged to a tea ceremony club, during two years in my senior high school days – but I was only a tea ceremony club member at the far end of the membership list.

Then, what did I do during these times? The honest answer is that I was enthusiastic about playing, from morning to night.

One such form of playing I was enthusiastic about, when I was a boy, was sparrow hunting. Such hunting was not to shoot at sparrows with an air gun but to hit them with a self-made rubber gun¹¹. When attempted, this sparrow hunting was extremely difficult. Although slow-moving young sparrows, which left their nests early in the spring, could be hit relatively easily, adult sparrows moved so swiftly that a child like me could hardly hit them. I should say that it was almost impossible to do that. Even so, I was not a type of child who gave it up immediately. With a view to hitting adult sparrows, I tried various methods. At last, after many

¹⁰ The traditional religion of the Japanese people, centered on respect for and worshipping of ancestral deities. Persons who have faith in this religious course and base their lives on this faith are referred to as Shintoist.

¹¹ A toy for children. A handmade gadget designed to throw small stones, etc., far away, based on flexibility of rubber strings.

trials and errors, I conceived the idea of hitting sparrows from behind leaves of trees when they perch on branches. As persons who have attempted to shoot sparrows know well, adult sparrows soon flee when you try to shoot them from in front of them. However, if they are approached from behind leaves of trees on which they perch, adult sparrows do not fly away, because they do not know that they are being approached. Of course, they were not visible from this side, but it was known that sparrows existed behind leaves, and it was possible to confirm the silhouettes of sparrows through leaves, although barely, so I tried to hit them with rubber guns. I remember that, because I devised this method of sparrow hunting, the volume of my sparrow catches substantially increased. If such actions are carried out at present, when the protection of natural birds is loudly called for, it may cause a serious scandal. That it may be referred to as playing that was possible only because it was carried out during the time when nature was rich.

I also studied how to catch flies. Probably because the sanitary condition was bad when I was a child, there were many flies, and they were troublesome for every household. Our home was no exception, so flypaper was hung in each room, but when my mother found the paper ineffective to catch flies, she ordered us brothers to catch flies, saying, "I will give you ¥10 per fly taken." A sum of ¥10 was a huge amount for children at that time, and if 10 flies were caught, the money would be ¥100, and it would become ¥1,000 when such activities were continued for a month. If I were successful, it would bring me great pocket money. In high spirits, I began chasing flies with a fly swatter¹² in my hand. When I actually attempted to swat flies, however, it was not easy. The more I chased flies, the more they continually flew, and I was unable to achieve the planned target. Therefore, I considered much. Probably, my actions were ineffective because I ran after flies, I thought. Reversely, it may be successful to knock flies down by flipping my wrist sharply when flies approach me, I considered.

I calmly stood in the middle of a room. When I remained there without making any movement for 1 or 2 minute, flies approached me based on their own initiative. Probably because they mistook me as a robot or scarecrow¹³, they came to me unwarily, and without losing such opportunities, I rapidly flipped the fly swatter quickly with my wrist, downing a fly in a single stroke. The achievement of this tactic proved really surprising, and I was able to hit scores of flies in a short period of time. Resultantly, no small pocket money was gained. But it was the unchanged personal habit of mine, even at that time and now, to become willing to challenge a higher technique when one method is mastered. So, the amount of pocket money became no longer an issue. In order to develop more difficult methods, I replaced the fly swatter with splittable chopsticks, thereby challenging fly catching. After immediately mastering the necessary technique, I then adopted the method of hitting flies with a single piece of the chopsticks and so on, developing new methods one after another. In later years, when I read in a book that Miyamoto Musashi¹⁴, a famous Japanese master swordsman, caught flies covering his rice bowl one after another with his chopsticks, I felt regret for not challenging such a feat; I was so ardent in developing fly-hitting techniques.

¹² A tool to strike and kill flies.

¹³ A human-shaped doll, made of bamboo, straws, etc., to be put up in rice paddies and fields, to scare away birds and other small animals from the places.

¹⁴ A great swordsman, who lived in the early phase of the Edo Period (1603–1868). He was such an excellent fencer that he was known to every Japanese.

Although I did not reach the level of Musashi, the master swordsman, in fly hitting technique, I am confident that I was not defeated by Musashi in the technique of catching bats, although comparison might be meaningless, since Musashi seemed to not have challenged bat-taking. When I was tired of hitting flies, I intended to replace the game from flies to bats, thereby trying to attain progress in my techniques. However, it turned out to be more difficult than I originally imagined.

When evening came, I went to a nearby forest, where innumerable bats were actively flying across here and there, and I calmly stood in front of a flock of flying bats, as I did in the case of flies. I planned to hit a bat in a stroke, as I thought bats would come near to me when I remained motionless for 1 or 2 minutes. However, bats did not come near me even after I waited for 5 minutes or 10 minutes. I could not even start a game. No matter how fast I could turn my hand holding a fly swatter, my fly-flapping method could not be effective unless bats came near me based on their own free will. Why on earth didn't bats fly near me? Wondering about this, I returned home and consulted an illustrated animal book and an encyclopaedia, to learn the mode of bats' life. Then I found a description saying to the following effect: "While bats cannot see things well, their hearing ability is so excellent that they can hear even the slightest sounds." I considered the mystery to have been solved. They must perceive my breathing, I thought.

So I went to the forest of bats and stood in front of the flock of flying bats again. Because I learned their mode of life, however, I should never commit such a foolish error as being perceived by bats because of my respiration. For that reason, I considered in my mind, two or three times, "My heart is already blank," and I restrained my breathing subsequently. Only after a few minutes, when I remained motionless, doing nothing but breathing slightly, a dozen bats came flying and moved around my body. After all, the reason for their keeping away from me was my breathing, I thought, and feeling that I made a great discovery, I was about to issue a voice because of great joy. But restraining my breathing, I examined the timing, and moved my swatter at an ideal moment. As a result, a bat wonderfully dropped to the ground.

After learning the knack, it was easy. I succeeded in hitting and dropping bats one after another in an interesting chain of actions. Remembering my actions now, it had no meaning in hitting and dropping bats. The plus factor, if any, was that I gained courage to fight against dreadful bats. Even so, why did I become so enthusiastic about bat killing? The reason appeared to be, in a nutshell, the pleasure of considering and devising new ideas. Even now, I become engrossed, forgetting about eating and sleeping, when I tackle new business, and in my childhood, the target of such enthusiasm was playing, not work. In this connection, I remember that I thought out ideas that were inferior to none of others in the "ninja game" that was in vogue when I was a child.

When I was an elementary school student, the great "Ninja¹⁵ boom" took place, and the children in my neighbourhood fabricated throwing knives (*Shuriken*¹⁶) of their own, and

¹⁵ Warrior groups or individuals, who would sneak into enemy areas or camps based on orders to detect enemy secrets or for assassination/destruction of the enemy. They usually dressed in black, and presumably had skill to run silently at full speed.

¹⁶ Iron needles or knives held in the palm and thrown at enemies. Principally used by ninja.

competed with one another in accurately throwing the knives far away. At that time, throwing knives in ninja play were created by cutting tin plates into cross or star shapes, but these throwing knives had limits in throwing distance, and they did not go where you tried to throw them. As was expected, it would be difficult to defeat others if the same types of throwing knives were formed. As such, I thought of a way to make throwing knives for ninja play by crossing 5-sun (close to 5-inch) nails instead of tin plates. Further, my idea was not only to form a cross with simple 5-sun nails -- I used two nails that had been flattened because I put them on a railroad track and let them get run over by a train. Now I should tell you that putting nails on railroad tracks was not only dangerous but also illegal, but being a child, I did not know laws, and I put nails on rails enthusiastically. After taking the splendidly flattened nails home, I rasped the tips of nails with a file, at great effort, perfecting cross-shaped throwing knives. When the throwing knives were completed, the next step was to practice ninja techniques. Because ninja rapidly ran through the night without making any sound, I put on black trousers and black shirts, wearing black cloth over my face, thereby converting myself into a ninja. By adopting the "ninja-style running method," without putting heels on the ground, I used to run through the town, and while running, I would hit fence after fence, electric pole after electric pole, with my throwing knife. My thought at that time was that the people who saw the knife markings on the following day might have thought "a ninja came by last night," and that "there really are ninja in society." Seen from the viewpoint of an adult, such a foolish thing could never happen. For my part, however, I wanted to become a real ninja, and I spent all my time thinking of ways to become a real ninja.

Apart from these, I studied methods of taking persimmons, figs, loquats and other fruit efficiently, without damaging them. I also examined methods of catching frogs. In other words, I was thinking of playing all the time -- that was my childhood. Naturally, therefore, my school achievements were not good. My marks were in the upper group of the middle class, at best, and usually they were in the middle. Such were my academic attainments until I was in the second year of senior high school. One reason for this state was that, as I explained earlier, I was indulged in playing. Another reason was that I had an abnormally compliant character. Although it may seem funny for me to say that my own character was compliant, frankly speaking, no one was as compliant and obedient as me. When a parent instructed me to "go shopping," I said, "yes," obediently complying with the instruction. When a schoolteacher ordered me to do homework, I did so meekly. Yet, though I was obedient, I did nothing unless I was told to do it by my teacher or a parent. Although I did homework, I didn't do preparation for lessons or their review, simply because I was not told by my teacher to do preparation or review. Teachers of present schools seem to instruct students to do preparation and review, but in my school days, no teachers recommended that students do preparatory study or review of lessons, although they told us to do homework. It may seem like an excuse to say that I did not do preparatory study or review of lessons -- truly, I did not do such study because I was not told to do so by my teacher. Had I been told to do such study, I would have said "yes" and done it obediently. On the occasion of Real Ability Tests, I made no preparations. The reason was that, before the tests, the teacher had said, "Real Ability Tests are designed to examine usual ability, so making preparations all of a sudden is meaningless." Considering that "Real Ability Tests are held to examine real power, and if so, my accurate ability can be measured, if I do no preparation," I did no preparation for the Tests.

Such being the case, it was unlikely that I recorded excellent achievements, and I was totally unrelated to an "elite" consciousness until the middle of my senior high school career. Without minding my poor academic achievements, I played amid nature, grappling with nature, being indulged in bat-taking, or frog catching, or fishing, and thereby I was totally absorbed in researching new playing methods.

As I look back, I feel that the roots of my being an artist lie in such contacts with nature. If, in my boyhood, I had devoted myself to study from morning to night, like other children, I would be totally different from the person I am today.

Senior High School Days

Until my junior high school days, I was eager to play without doing any study. My parents seemingly hoped that even such boy would graduate from insect-taking or "ninja" play when he reached senior high school, and that I would begin sincere study. Far from their wishes, however, my enthusiasm for play did not wane in the least, even after I began senior high school.

Soon after entering senior high, I became the officer of the students' council, serving as an election management officer. Further, I concurrently performed two or three officer functions at one time, and over the three-year period, I served as seven or eight officers. Meanwhile, I was a member of the Calligraphy Club, so I was unable to use my time for only play, as before. Even so, I did not lose my interest in fishing or frog-catching. Finding time between student council events or club activities, I went to the riverside, considering how I could catch dace or sweet fish with my bare hands, what would be the most effective method, if a net were used, and such things, as before. In short, I was delayed in development mentally, physically and also intellectually. I did not want to get high marks by studying hard, and I did not feel much interest in girls. Even if I had been interested in girls, I was so childish and naïve in my conduct that I was far from a boy that could be a target of girls' affection. More than that, my stature was extremely low. I remember well, even now, that my height was 136 cm when I was in the first year of junior high school, 141 cm when I was a third-year student, and it was 160 cm when I graduated from senior high school. Subsequently, I continued to grow taller, and around the time I graduated from my university, I finally reached 170 cm tall. As such, I was of the greatly delayed development type, both mentally and physically, and accordingly I spent a long period in childhood.

Although I still retained childishness at that time, I am proud that I devoted my entire energy and soul to student council activities during my senior high school period. As an election management officer at one time, and as an executive member for the cultural festival and camp fire at different times, I worked in preparation for events, sometimes forgetting to sleep and eat. If my experience of touching nature through playing was my rooting as an artist, I think the action ability, leadership and management capability I acquired through student council activities must be my rooting as an entrepreneur. Speaking of club activities, senior high was not my first participation in such activities. Before that, when I was in the first year of junior high school, I joined the cheering club, and in my third year of junior high, I was the leader of the club. After entering senior high, I joined the Calligraphic Club, but frankly speaking, I was not an ardent member of this club. In fact, it would be better to say my motive for joining the club was not pure. When I was in the second year of senior high, I had a crush on a certain girl – even though I was late in maturing – but she totally ignored me.

and would have nothing to do with me. And to my surprise, that girl was awarded the Education Minister's Prize in the field of calligraphy. After learning this, I joined the Calligraphic Club, with the motive: "I will not be defeated by such a girl -- I too can do calligraphy." Accordingly, my activities could never last long, and I could never improve in my calligraphic ability. However, my activities in the ESS (English Speaking Society, where students learn English debate, English discussion, English speech, English drama), which I joined in my university days, were not incomplete work. This was because I assumed the post of ESS chairman when I was a junior, and I had to lead 400 student members. I was conscious of ESS affairs while both awake and asleep. It goes without saying that, eventually, this experience enhanced my management ability, which was first cultivated during senior high school.

The Period of a Ronin Student (Unsuccessful University Entrant)

In my third year of senior high school, all the students around me started studying for entrance examinations to go to a university. The students who had been eager to perform club activities until then began learning English words or historic knowledge by heart, even during recess. I, however, who was indulging in student council activities, fishing and insect-catching, was unable to start studying, although I knew I had to prepare for entrance examinations. Because I did not have a habit of studying, I did not know how to study and what to learn, even though I abruptly made up my mind to start studying. For this reason, I failed in entrance examinations, and had to lead the life of a "ronin" (unsuccessful university entrant), although unwillingly.

However, at age 18, when I began "ronin" life, a great change took place in my life. I, someone who eagerly examined how to catch insects, how to kill bats, and how to take fish, suddenly became alive to the merit of reading, on a single day. The beginning was the reading of a book entitled *Discussion of Friendship*¹⁷, written by Abel Bonnard. The books I had read before were only *Tokaidochu Hizakurige*¹⁸ and *Aesop's Fables*¹⁹, and I had not read any significant books. It was true that I read *Shukke to Sonodeshi*²⁰ when I was in the third year of junior high school, but I did so only because the teacher in charge of my class said, "Read this book because it is a good one." So, I was a child who obediently read a book if instructed by a teacher. It was good of me to be compliant, but I would soon become sleepy when I started reading. Because only my intuition was developed, while my intellectual development lagged behind, I fell asleep, unaware, as soon as I started reading. I remember that I went into deep sleep when I came to about the fifth page of a book. At that time, I was never good at logical thinking and so often, was unable to follow through the storyline of a book. In fact, I was a child whose intuition, or, more accurately, sensitivity, only had developed, and who felt the greatest joy in contact with nature -- in other words, I was a child whose intellectual development was delayed. As I read Bonnard's *Discussion of Friendship*, however, I was totally changed, in a so-called Copernican revolution. The

¹⁷ Bonar, Abel (translated by Ando, Tuguo), *Yujoran (Discussion of Friendship)*, Kadokawa Bunko, 1984.

¹⁸ Comic writing published in 1802. Juppensha, Ikku, (notes added by Nakamura, Yukihiro), *Tokaidochu Hizakurige*, Shogakukan (Collection of Japanese Classic Literature), 1985.

¹⁹ Aisopos, (translated by Nishimoto, Keisuke), *Aesop's Fables*, Poplar Sha, "Collection of World's Famous Fairy Tales", 1987.

²⁰ Kurata, Hyakuzo, *Shukke to Sono Deshi (Priest and His Disciples)*, Iwanami Bunko, 1992.

Discussion of Friendship was a translated book, and it was a very difficult book whose logic could not be understood unless the subject and predicate of a sentence were confirmed one by one for each sentence. However, the emotion I felt when I succeeded in reading it was beyond expression. I felt how wonderful it was, and I was surprised that such a moving world could be hidden in a book. The emotion, or the sense of accomplishment, was the same as the sense of achievement indicated with my cry of "I got it!" when I was engrossed in fishing and insect-catching. In brief, I was intellectually awakened by Bonnard's *Discussion of Friendship*. A naïve boy, who was bent on student council activities and contact with nature, turned his eyes to the intellectual world through printed characters, for the first time, after he became a "ronin." Subsequently, I read books and books. I read books from morning till evening.

What I read first were books written by Naoya Shiga²¹. I remember reading *Anyu Koro*²² or some others written by him, because his sentences were easy to understand and were considered to be model sentences. With this as the beginning, I read all of his books. Subsequently, I'm sure I read the "Shirakaba (White Birch) School"²³, by all means, and I read all the books written by Takeo Arishima²⁴ and Saneatsu Mushanokoji²⁵. Thereafter, I read *Seido no Christ*²⁶, by Yoshio Nagayo²⁷, who was also a novelist influenced by the Shirakaba School. I then read works by Tatsuo Hori²⁸, Doppo Kunikida²⁹ and Katsuichiro Kamei³⁰. I was completely absorbed in reading these books. Of course, I was reading books while riding in a train, and, in fact, whenever I went somewhere. In other words, the target of my enthusiasm shifted from fish or insects to books.

During that time, I read books from morning till night. My motto during these days was "One book each day." However, this motto was not so easy to achieve. Reading a thick book every day was almost impossible, so, I chose thin books, and met my goal of a book a day. Finally, when I graduated from my university, I had read well over 1,000 books. Earlier, I caught fish, dragonflies, bats and frogs, but the targets were changed to books, and I accomplished the objective of one book per day. During some period, I carried books with me everywhere. I read pure literature, Asian philosophy, European philosophy and Japanese classics, as I

²¹ A novelist (1883~1971). Inaugurated a magazine "Shirakaba" (White Birch), jointly with Saneatsu Mushanokoji.

²² Shiga, Naoya, *Anyu Koro*, Shincho Bunko, 1990.

²³ A faction in modern Japanese literature, upholding humanism and idealism. Members of the school also showed interest in arts, and contributed to the introduction of impressionists to Japan.

²⁴ A novelist (1887~1923). A member of the Shirakaba school. Had a strong humanistic inclination, and renounced all assets for the benefit of poor people.

²⁵ A novelist (1885~1976). A member of the Shirakaba school. He advocated positive acceptance of human life and trust in human beings, and created an ideal community: "New Village."

²⁶ Nagayo Yoshio, *Seido no Christ*, Iwanami Bunko, 1984.

²⁷ A novelist and playwright (1888~1961). A member of the Shirakaba school. Having a strong idealistic tendency, he wrote novels about the fate of tragic persons with strong individuality.

²⁸ A novelist (1905~1953). He tried to root modern French intellect in the Japanese society, and thereby developed a unique literary style.

²⁹ A poet and novelist (1871~1908). Pioneered the role of naturalistic literature in Japan.

³⁰ A literary critic (1907~1967).

came across with them. In particular, I read Japanese classics carefully, all the more because they were within the realm of entrance examination subjects.

With regard to *Tsurezuregusa*³¹, for instance, I read it to the degree of classifying all words into their grammatical word categories. For this reason, I still remember many of my favourite phrases. As for others, I read Japanese classics based on the original books. Because they belonged to university examination subjects, I challenged them through their original forms, if possible. As to why I was absorbed in reading so much, one reason was that my eyes were opened to the merit of reading, and another was that, being a professional man, my father was always at home. He was always smiling as I would sit reading a book in front of my desk, and if I didn't, he became angry, and would hit me or kick me, saying, "What are you doing? Study!" If I sat reading a book, he was smiling. Even so, he would bump my head when retreating to his place, but at any rate, he would not bother me if I read a book in front of my desk.

I disliked such a father. Being a powerful man, however, it was impossible to fight against him squarely. In such a complication with my father, my only soul-soothing objects were books. My only purpose in living was to talk with and contact, soul to soul, authors who lived in Japan and abroad at that time and who had lived in ancient eras. This is continuing even now, and I read books whenever I feel lonely. Particularly, I read old classics, such as books by Confucius³², Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu³³, and I consider gods and Buddha. If they are old classics, they contain deep meaning and much to be learned.

All Power Stems from Intuition

It goes without saying that such experience as indulgence in reading formed the basis of my ability to create "haiku" (17-syllabled poems) and to write sentences. Such ability was cultured after the age of 18, when I started my "ronin" life, but considering that I was indulged in fishing and insect-catching before that, I have to say that I was a very immature boy. Reviewing it now, however, such experience represented a great positive factor in my life. But what is the basis for this flat statement?

As argued by Saneatsu Mushanokoji, in his *Discussion of Human Life*³⁴, it appears that age 18 is slightly too early to concentrate on reading books. The age of 19 or 20 seems the suitable time, he contended. This is because, if someone enters the world of books and

³¹ An essay written in the Kamakura Period (1185–1333). It is composed of 243 sections stating thoughtful opinions and records of social events, etc. Its sentences are known for excellence. The highest peak of essays in Japan. Yoshida, Kenko, (notes added by Imaizumi, Tadayoshi), *Tsurezuregusa*, Kadokawa Bunko, 1994.

³² A philosopher and scholar (c. 551–498BC) in the Spring and Autumn period of ancient China. His thoughts can be learned from "Analects," a collection of his sayings and conversations.

³³ Lao-tzu was a philosopher in the Spring and Autumn period of ancient China, and the founder of Taoism. He contended that the basic substance of the cosmos is "tao" (meaning "the way"), and that people would not fight with each other if they dedicated themselves to cleanliness/quietness, unselfishness, inaction, and nature. Zhuang-tzu was a representative thinker of Taoism, following the course advocated by Lao-tzu. He considered emptiness, unselfishness, and inaction to be the ideal mental state, and argued that the world, consisting of these elements, was "heaven," and that "people" were running counter to heaven.

Zhuang-tzu, *Zhuang-tzu*, Iwanami Bunko, 1982. Lao-tzu, *Lao-tzu*, Kodansha (Gakujutsu Bunko), 1997.

³⁴ Mushanokoji, Saneatsu, *Jinseiron (Discussion of Human Life)*, Iwanami Shinsho, 1984.

printed letters when he is too young, various concepts come into his mind, weakening his intuition and sensitivity, and depriving him of his creativity and originality.

A German philosopher, probably Schopenhauer, said to the effect that recognition becomes valid only when a variety of concepts are combined with one another. According to his theory, human recognition represents the grouping of concepts, and because of this, no recognition becomes deeper unless various concepts are collected by reading books or hearing tales. However, it is intuition; in other words, one's spirituality or soul, that determines what concepts should be adopted and used for recognition. A person with warped spirituality is prone to collect only pessimistic concepts, forming pessimistic recognition, and conversely, a person with bright spirituality is likely to adopt optimistic concepts and become an optimist. Namely, the order is from intuition to concept and then to recognition, and if various concepts enter a certain person's mind when that person is very young, he may diffuse other persons' thoughts, while losing his own originality.

This means that it is better for a man to refine intuition or spirituality, and avoid accumulating various concepts in his mind, while he is too young. Then, how is intuition or spirituality cultivated? The answer is that intuition or spirituality is cultured through contact with nature while someone is still small, or through contact with a person's parents, particularly his or her mother. We all know, empirically, that if someone grows up without being loved by his or her mother, that he or she is prone to have pessimistic thoughts. It is also empirically known that children who grow up without touching nature are likely to become persons of deformed character, although they may have much knowledge.

In this respect, I was very lucky. I spent every day, not just trying to touch nature but trying to capture birds, animals and insects by fighting against nature. I did not learn any entertainment know-how, and regarding study at home, I only did homework. My academic achievements were not good accordingly, but I was no dropout student. I was neither an elite nor a dropout. I was an ordinary student. Instead, my inner energy was very strong, although it may seem rather strange for me to say so personally. Regarding bat-taking or fishing, I was not satisfied unless I did it thoroughly. During summer vacation, I went to the riverside with my younger brother, trying to catch fish, in fierce competition. My roots as an artist really lie in this. In my contact with nature, my creativity and intuition were cultivated without knowing about it.

In other words, my development was delayed, and my intellectual growth lagged behind others, but accordingly, my period of childhood was much longer than others'. Therefore, I have not lost the mind of a boy, and whenever I composed haiku, reminiscences of my childhood days were frequently taken up. In fact, the collection of my haiku³⁵ works contains many short poems compliantly telling memories of my childhood, and this is the force of my intuition, if it is categorized. As explained earlier, various concepts are combined by the force of intuition to become recognition, and without great development of intuition, there is no room for the growth of unique philosophy.

³⁵ Short poems, composed of 5-7-5 syllables for a total of 17 syllables and characterized by a focus on one of the four seasons. "Haiku and "tanka" (short poems) together constitute the two short-poetry forms of Japanese literature.

The more I think of this, the more I feel I was lucky, as I was able to touch nature as much as I wish. If I only had read books at my desk, or if I had learned entertainment know-how from others, I could not have become able to perform four or five functions: those of a business administrator, artist, educator, etc., as at present. No doubt, I could never have shown creativity as I do now.

Hard Study after Age 18 Determined My Life

Persons who have been doing nothing except reading books since they were young may know a variety of concepts, but if they were asked, "What is your opinion?" or "What do you think about it?" -- Can they give other answers besides "I don't know"? Of course, there may be exceptions, but generally speaking, it cannot be denied that, if a person's mind becomes filled with concepts, it will become difficult to develop his own ideas or display his own creativity. In this sense, it is no good to continue study after study, starting from a very young age, and to cram too much knowledge into the head. It may be right to say that, when a person is young, he should contact nature, and that a child absorbed in play, without doing study, has a brighter future.

However, even if I say that a child eager to play has great possibilities, it would be meaningless to become an adult addicted to playing. After all, in some aspect of the process of becoming an adult, there must be a time in which a person must study hard, in order to acquire the minimum intellectual ability. Saneatsu Mushanokoji said the time after age 18 may be the ideal period for such study, and in my case, I was exactly age 18 when I became absorbed in reading. But I did not intentionally choose that timing. It occurred only resultantly. Even so, I am confident that it was because I started hard study at the age of 18 that I can enter the world of philosophy, logic and economy easily without any sense of resistance.

According to books³⁶, Winston Churchill, the famous Prime Minister of Great Britain, spent a childhood similar to mine. Churchill was born into a noble family, and great expectations were placed on him, even when he was a child. During his elementary school days, however, he was absorbed in playing, and he did not study in the least. As such, his marks at Latin tests were always nil, so he was a dropout, in the current meaning of the word. But a great change in his fate took place at that time. Totally giving up hope for his son, who sabotaged school lessons, Churchill's father said, "If you dislike study so much, that's OK. You should go into the army." Therefore, Churchill went into the army, reluctantly. In addition, he was stationed in the middle of an African desert. In the desert, surrounded by sand, sand and more sand, Churchill, who was so good at playing, had nothing to do.

Being so bored, he said, "Then, I should read a book," and started reading one, which turned out to be extremely interesting. He thought, "Is there such an exciting realm in this world?" Learning the pleasure of reading, he immediately became a captive of the world of reading. Subsequently, he fiercely started study, and in addition to Latin, which he had been particularly poor at, he mastered political science, diplomatic history, economics and other fields of learning necessary for a politician. Then, using the learning he studied in the desert,

³⁶ Turumi, Yusuke, *Winston Churchill*, Kodansya, 1958.

Broad, Lewis (translated by Matsubara, Hiroo and Yamada, Sumitomo), *Winston Churchill*, Kobunsha, 1965.

Churchill transferred from the army to the political world. He eventually played a prominent role as the great Prime Minister who helped the United Kingdom, his motherland, escape from a crisis of defeat in World War II. And the more I learn about Churchill's childhood, the more keenly I feel that his childhood was similar to mine.

Of course, unlike Churchill, I was not a man from a noble family. However, my father brewed sake in Nadagogo, the sake-brewing district of Nishinomiya near to Kobe and renowned for some of the finest sakes in all Japan, and he worked for the biggest brewer of the times, which employed as many as 200 persons. The war started, but until he had to serve, he kept on brewing sake. My father was the 6th generation, which makes me -- the eldest of his sons -- the 7th generation. An older brother of my father's mother was a playwright who went by the name of Shin Hasegawa. He wrote *Mabuta no Haha*³⁷ and *Tokijiro Kutukake*³⁸ which made him famous in the prewar and postwar eras. However, my father wasn't the studying type as he was only interested in martial arts and winning fights. So, at 16, he volunteered for the army and, only after the war, enrolled in college. My mother was three years older than my father. She and my father's father were cousins. So, a cousin married a cousin's son. They got married anyway and I was born when my father was president of the student body at his college.

As far as artistic atmosphere was concerned, however, it seemed that my environment was superior to that of Winston Churchill. My mother came from a pre-war bourgeois family, which was visited regularly by a Noh teacher who gave Noh lessons, and my mother learned Noh, "yokyoku" (Noh songs) and Japanese dancing, together with her family members. As was the common practice amongst bourgeois families, my mother also studied the esthetic arts of tea ceremony and flower arrangement. She even learned ballet. After the war broke out, the entire family reportedly went to the military camps to cheer up and encourage soldiers. It must have been rather unusual for a Japanese girl to learn ballet -- apart from Noh and Japanese dancing -- in the early years of the Showa era. In addition, it was not only ballet that attracted her interest. She learned European-type calligraphy and chorus singing and car driving, so she was a woman willing to learn all arts, irrespective of whether they were from Europe or Asia. As such, she probably wanted me to learn some kinds of entertainment. Because both of my father's house and mother's were burned in the war, however, our family had no such economic resources. But, my father sold the land where the house had stood and built an apartment with the money he made, renting out the rooms for a living. He started the postwar era supporting my grandparents and all of his brothers and sisters. The age of barrel had passed; it was now the age of the bottle. I grew up as an extremely wild boy absorbed in sparrow-hunting and bat-taking. Even so, because I grew up while hearing my mother's tales about her experiences about entertainment lessons, I think I inherited her culture-loving characteristic, although I received no entertainment lessons.

My Encounter with Calligraphy

Thus far, I have been summarizing my personal life up to my youth. Next, I would like to explain my direct contacts with art.

³⁷ A modern drama that recounts the feelings of a gambler as he recollects his mother.

³⁸ A story of chivalrous-spirited man in Edo period.

First, I will explain my relationship with calligraphy. As I stated earlier, the beginning was joining the Calligraphic Club, when I was in my second year of senior high school. As I also stated before, my motive for joining the club was not pure, and more than that, I still was too eager to play, so I was not yet awake to the attractiveness of arts, and my calligraphic activities did not last long.

I was 35 years old when I again encountered calligraphy. At that time, I had opened a new stage intellectually, mentally and artistically, so I did not abandon calligraphic activities, as I had in high school.

My tale goes back and forth, but I started to learn Noh, when I became a university student. While playing an active part in the ESS of Doshisha University, I also put my registration in the Noh Department, starting to learn the ABCs of Noh. At the same time, I joined the Urasenke School of tea ceremony, striving to learn the spirit of tea ceremony. These activities were because I was enlightened by the book *Kadensho (Fushi Kaden)*³⁹, written by Zeami⁴⁰, with regard to Noh, and by *The Book of Tea*⁴¹, written by Tenshin Okakura, concerning tea ceremony. However, I had to suspend Noh-related activities temporarily after I became a junior, when I was extremely busy with my duties as ESS chairman. Nonetheless, I resumed Noh learning when I was a senior, after resigning the ESS chairmanship. During the one-year period, I was able to refine my ability of Noh fluting (which is called Noh Kan). I had to suspend it again, however, upon my graduation from the university. I was 35 when I started training for the third time. As for tea ceremony, I continued to learn tea ceremony of the "Urasenke School," that of Sado Gakkai and then the techniques of the "Omotesenke School." So I believed firmly that I was able to deepen my tea ceremony knowledge, from my personal viewpoint. That was that I was very self-conscious of the fact that I lacked any sort of cultural identity as a Japanese. I studied English and jumped at every opportunity to talk with foreign students at Kyoto University. Yet, it was painful when a foreigner would ask me about Japanese culture and I'd do everything to explain the history and background, even act something out or compare it to western culture, and still yet I couldn't explain it logically in English and, as a result, I wasn't understood and I wasn't respected. I was 20 at the time. That's when I started studying Japanese culture. I wanted to know the history, the logic. A passion almost insane grew inside me.

All the more because I had strong understanding of arts, my zeal was naturally different when I resumed calligraphy again at age 35. With determination to master the arcana of calligraphy, I devoted myself to the world of calligraphy as much as time allowed. I sometimes continued writing calligraphic letters for more than a day. Of course, such concentration was physically very difficult. First, my body was fatigued. Then, my spinal column became tense, and my waist and buttocks ached. Above all, I became bored. Typically, after three or four hours of calligraphic practice, anyone would like to stop doing it.

³⁹ Zeami, *Fushi Kaden (The Transmission of the Acting of Flower Style)*, Iwanami Bunko, 1958.

⁴⁰ Noh player/scriptwriter in the early phase of the Muromachi Period (1392-1573). He made conventional Noh a tender entertainment, at the same time providing Noh an artistic base. "*Fushi Kaden*" (The Transmission of the Acting of Flower Style), usually referred to as "*Kadensho*," was his representative work.

⁴¹ Okakura, Tenshin, *Book of Tea*, Kodansha (Gakujutsu Bunko), 1994.

In my case, however, I never stop doing it at this point. No matter how my body may be tired, or how bored I become, I make a habit of continuing calligraphy silently. Then, after passing a certain time point, I become enchanted in a state of ecstasy, which is beyond expression, and then, a self different from my usual self appears, and wonderful calligraphic works that cannot be regarded as mine, are accomplished. This must be the state of self-effacement. How does one arrive at that state? I think such a state is the knack of learning something. Namely, I consider that, irrespective of calligraphy, painting and music, the essence of arts can be arrived at only if the barrier of boredom is surpassed. Even so, general people soon resign themselves if they face this barrier. "I will stop doing this today, as I became tired," they will say. But if so, it will be impossible to reach the arcana of any art.

Then, why can I overcome the physical hardship and a bored mind? The reason is not that I am physically robust or that I am mentally tough. I am an ordinary man, both physically and mentally. The reason I can overcome these difficulties is that my body has acquired the knack of learning techniques based on playing during my childhood. I continued research for several hours consecutively, and I felt great joy and emotion, when I captured bats and fish after standing several hours in a row. These experiences are incorporated in my body, so I can easily overcome the difficulties. No, the word "overcome" may not be right here. I rather wait for the start of my bodily hardship or my boredom. When my joints become aching, I become pleased, saying to myself, "Well, the real exercise will start shortly." This is when the sensitivity of my youth reawakens and the real creativity flows.

However, it is the world of calligraphy that, even after such activities, improvement cannot be felt keenly. This was also true for me, and although I resumed calligraphic exercise, I did not know how much I improved. In the case of calligraphy and painting, it seems that a person's real power cannot be judged by that person. After continuing practice for 15 years, however, my calligraphic ability came to be positively evaluated by others. One of my calligraphic works was arranged to be housed permanently in the British Museum. It is impossible to say how much this encouraged me.

My Encounter with Singing

I started learning singing when I was 40 years old. In that year, as a yearly event of Worldmate, which I presided over, we held an oratorio opera of my own composition, entitled "Coming of the Seven Deities of Good Fortune⁴² to Heaven," in the precincts of Sumiyoshi Great Shrines⁴³ in Osaka. During the performance, we had professional singers sing the songs in the opera.

However, Ms. Aiko Uematsu, my mentor, said, "When hearing these singers' songs, I feel your voice is by far better than theirs. Isn't it better for you to sing?" "What?" I asked. "Yes, your voice matches the songs in the opera," she strongly insisted. "You should do it." Remembering that about a half year before it was said, I became acquainted with an opera singer, named Mr. Katsuta. Thinking furthermore that, with Ms. Uematsu insisting so hard, the development may be a matter of providence; I began exercise at the age of 40. After

⁴² These deities are Daikokuten, Ebisu, Bishamonten, Benzaiten, Fukurokuju, Jurojin, and Hotei. The boat, carrying these seven deities, is called a treasure ship.

⁴³ A representative Shinto shrine in Japan. There are many shrines with the same name throughout Japan.

starting exercise, my voice seemed to match opera, as was expected, and the opera instructor said, "Had you started training when you were young, you would have become a world-class baritone singer." I thought it was a compliment. Even so, I remembered that, during my university days, I was repeatedly solicited to join the Glee Club. Because the Glee Club's room was adjacent to the ESS's room, I had opportunities to talk with Glee Club members, and whenever I talked with them, I was repeatedly seduced to enter the Glee Club, as they said, "You should join the Glee Club. As your voice and physique are suitable for singing, please join our club." Probably because they solicited so much, my voice must have been really suitable for singing, and I have sometimes tried to imagine what my achievements might have been, had I actually started singing exercise then.

From European-Type Painting to the Fashion World

Looking back on my life, the age 35 signified a great turnaround time. As I stated before, I resumed exercise of both calligraphy and Noh in that year. There was one more technique that I started to learn in that year. It was painting. At first, I conducted initial exercise under the guidance of Buddhist picture⁴⁴ and Japanese-style painting instructors, and although the level was not so high, I thought I adopted a new approach as much as possible.

Last year, I experienced a great change in my painting. Through the introduction of a certain person, I began learning painting from a European painting instructor, and I was surprised with his explanation of European-style painting. He said that anything can be done in European-style painting. Because there are many restrictions in the case of Japanese-style painting, it is not allowed to paint as one likes, but in the field of European-style painting, all techniques have been tried, so that anything can be done now, according to him. It is permitted to use any materials and to draw anything, he said. If so, this form of art exactly matched my character, so I started to draw paintings as I wished. And only in the period of one year, my works have become highly evaluated by specialists to a degree surprising even to myself.

First, Kyuryudo, which is Japan's No. 1 publisher of books on paintings, recognized my talent, and the publisher arranged and issued books of my paintings. Secondly, I was chosen as one of the modern painters representing Japan. In addition, my painting was chosen to be included in the Yubidou's *Collection of Excellent Paintings in 2000*.

It was like a dream that I obtained such high evaluation only one year after I shifted to the field of European-type paintings, but I further went on. I decided to participate in the "contest of design pictures" sponsored by the Ministry of Education, which is the most authoritative gateway to success for fashion designers in Japan. As a result, both of two products I submitted were given second-place honours among 5,000 pictures that took part in the competition. I have already stated that all of the people participating in the competition are striving to become professionals in that field. In other words, students in their 10s or 20s, studying in specialized schools, submitted their products drawn through their utmost efforts, and it seemed that a profound sensation was created as I, a man of age 50, succeeded in obtaining 2nd place amid such fierce competition. Of course, it was the first time in the history of the contest for a 50-year-old to participate, and to win 2nd place at that.

⁴⁴ Drawings of images of Buddha and other Buddhism-related objects and themes.

As already mentioned, I am thinking of sending my products to the Paris Collection in March next year, but there was a reason such a rank amateur as me won a prize in the fashion design contest. Namely, the world of fashion design is heading toward the direction in which importance is attached to the design of fabrics, rather than shapes of apparel. Speaking of world-known Japanese designers, Issei Miyake and Kenzo Takata are famous, but they have worked to make the shape of apparel novel and new. With regard to the shapes of apparel, however, new styles have been exhausted, as in the case of European-style paintings, so further novel designs can hardly be expected. Thus, it appears that the point of competition has changed from design shapes to the design of fabrics; in other words, what fabric design can be produced. As a result, whether or not a designer has painting sense seems to determine his success or failure. Accordingly, persons with excellent picture sense, those who can show remarkable picturesque inspiration, or persons with rich colour sense, appear to have greater chances. This was the reason my two products were awarded second place, while youngsters who have studied shape designs with all their strength were not successful.

To make explanation for the honour of myself, it was not the case that my products, drawn in an appropriate manner as European-style pictures, were fortunately chosen as excellent works. Of course, luck may be one reason. For my part, however, I put in my best effort from morning till night, and I thought I displayed the utmost creativity and ingenuity. I made satisfactory products, after overcoming the same barriers as those experienced in calligraphy, several times. The ability for such concentration and creativity was cultivated while I was a child, as explained earlier.

Because my academic achievements were not good, I have walked a road unrelated to the so-called elite course. All the more because of this, I did not have self-pride, but instead I had the mental strength of not being discouraged or dejected no matter what others might say. I always considered things brightly in a forward-looking manner, believing that it is all right if they become better tomorrow or on the following day. I think such an attitude bore fruit in the field of arts.

Compliant Character Draws Out Ability

And if there is another reason for me to be able to extensively practice artistic activities, I think it must be my compliant, obedient character. I personally believe that this is also a major reason.

As stated earlier, human beings do not know much about themselves, although they feel they do. It is frequently seen, in our surroundings, that a person who is full of confidence in his personal ability does not have real ability, while a person who considers that he does not have ability is in fact endowed with ability. So, aren't there many cases in which a person who is endowed with real ability considers he has none and ends his life without showing such ability? This is too good to be true, but regarding the reason for such a person's inability to display his talents, I believe it is because he lacks a compliant nature. In my case, I started singing because Ms. Uematsu recommended that I do so, saying, "Your voice is suitable for the opera, so you should do it," as I explained earlier. But if I had an obstinate character, and if I had said, "That cannot be right," and I had turned down her suggestion, the road to my becoming a singer probably would have been closed. However, I was obedient by nature, so I felt that the suggestion might be true and that if so, I should comply with it. Thus, the course of an opera singer was opened in the most natural way, I think.

As for the course for a fashion designer, Ms. Hanae Mori⁴⁵ said, "In the present fashion business, a pictorial sense is most strongly demanded. Mr. Fukami, how about making a challenge in that regard?" I accepted her suggestion compliantly, saying, "Is that so? Then, I will do it," and this opened new course after new course for me. If I had refrained from accepting the suggestion, with the remark, "There can be no talent to become a fashion designer in me," my present status could never have been obtained.

In this way, I have had an inclination to accept any suggestion compliantly since I was a child. Speaking frankly, I did not notice such a compliant character for many years, but looking back now, I think many courses have opened for me all the more because I have had such a compliant, obedient character. That was also true when I started to learn playing the piano at the age of 35. I obediently followed a suggestion from one of my acquaintances, who said, "Mr. Fukami, it will be better for you to learn how to play the piano," and I started to learn it without having the slightest idea of supporting myself based on piano-playing techniques. Of course, even if I considered supporting myself with piano techniques, it would have totally lacked reality, but at any rate, I would have never touched a piano, if I had not been compliant by nature.

Regarding my encounter with music, it occurred when I was the first-year student in junior high school (12 years old). I had a friend, named Matsumoto, and he was a great fan of Beethoven. Being such a person, he mentioned Beethoven in connection with anything. He talked about "Pastorale" (Symphony No. 6) and "Destiny" (Japanese name of Symphony No. 5) frequently, and probably knowing everything about Beethoven, he boisterously insisted that I must listen to Beethoven, as his music is superb. Thinking that listening to Beethoven's music might be one aspect of my acquaintance with that friend, I actually listened to it, but I could not understand excellent points of his music. At any rate, I became sleepy whenever I tried to listen to it, and my interest was not aroused, by any means.

Strangely, when I started my "ronin" life, and became awakened to the merit of printed letters, however, I suddenly wanted to listen to Beethoven, which I had heard previously. Probably because sounds that I had listened to almost as a matter of obligation remained dormant in some part of my mind, I badly wanted to hear Beethoven, and I borrowed the collection of light classic music records published by Reader's Digest, which was by chance owned by my aunt, and as background music for reading books, I listened to Beethoven's music and the collection until the phonograph record wore out. Therefore, I encountered music when I was in my third-year of junior high, but I did not clearly realize it, because under the influence of my father, who was fond of Frank Nagai⁴⁶ and Ai Goerge⁴⁷, I was in the habit of mimicking Frank Nagai and Ai George. Their popular songs belonged to a world completely unrelated to high-brow classic music, but it was significantly tasty itself.

By the way, the activity I am particularly good at is not painting or calligraphy but mimicry. Although I am not sure whether or not I can deem it part of the roots for my artistic activities, I am quite confident that no one else can be as good at imitating cries of cocks or dogs. And I am also skilled in mimicking human beings. I was immensely good at immediately catching

⁴⁵ A female fashion designer, representing modern Japan.

⁴⁶ A Japanese popular singer, who played an active role in the latter half of the 1950s toward the 1960s.

⁴⁷ A Japanese popular singer, who played an active role in the 1950s toward the 1960s.

the characteristics of other people and imitating them. In my senior high days, I used to make my classmates laugh by imitating our teachers. Because there is a saying that creation begins with mimicry, however, it is a judicious way of starting any techniques, including Noh, tea ceremony, flower arrangement, opera and ballet. I think there is no problem, if it is started with accurate imitation, to be followed by a suitable state and techniques. From this viewpoint, it is considered right to say that form and voice mimicry, as well as the imitation of cock walking and crying, was one root of my artistic activities. Factors essential for form/voice imitation are observation power and intuition. I gained them while touching nature in my childhood. Here again, playing during childhood may become an important keyword.

Apart from such roots-seeking, it is really pleasing that my painting, calligraphy and singing, which I started at the age of 35, became recognized during the past 15 years. What I feel when I review this period of 15 years, however, is that, after all, factors required for arts are creativity and individuality. It is creativity and individuality that determine energy arising from paintings and calligraphic letters, and for them intuition-based ideas are essential. In the case of painting, colour sense and colour expression are very important. I have learned this gradually, and after practicing European-style painting, I became able to issue the colour of my preference in a year. Accordingly, I was chosen as a painter that can be appealed to the world, and some of my works are about to be contained in the "Collection of Excellent Works in 2000." As for the reason for this, I think it was because my products show colour sense, rich ideas and, in addition, warm energy exuding from boy-like naiveness. In other words, my naïve, pure energy was evaluated highly. If such internal excellence is retained carefully, it is considered to naturally manifest itself in artistic works. And the roots of such creative ideas rested with the world of playing in my boyhood, if I may dare to repeat myself again.

My Achievements as a Person of Religion

Encounter with the God

I related above, at great length, my history of relationship with art, but next I would like to look back on another side of myself as a person of religion.

As mentioned above, I was a naïve and innocent child until sometime around my high school days, spending all my time for pleasure and amusement from morning to night. I, for my part, think of myself that there I had a grounding in art as an artist which is my present vocation. Then, to mention my present grounding as a person of religion, I can say that I almost had none whatsoever. Although I sometimes saw spirits which could not exist, in this world children who have seen such things are definitely not rare. Besides, in my case, this mysterious world quickly disappeared whenever I started studying arithmetic or cooking. Therefore, I feel that I did not quite have a shamanistic ability. I may have had a sign, but I was a very ordinary child.

The only thing is, I was different from an ordinary child in my excessive love for the god. It is not that my parents were involved in a particular religion. My mother was an extremely pious woman. Wherever there was a shrine or a temple, she would put her hands together in prayer. I loved to hear about the god from grownups and I remember that when thinking of the god, I felt something like excitement.

For such a child like myself, I encountered a turning point when I was 15. At that time, invited by some one, my mother entered a religious organization. As I mentioned briefly earlier, my father was a rough person who beat and kicked my mother all the time, and my mother was always suffering from my father's violence and selfish behavior. At such a time, invited by an acquaintance, my mother made up her mind to become a believer of a religion. To me, knowing that mother was having a sad time, suffering from father's violence, mother's becoming a believer of this religion made me feel very pleased and I became a believer together with my mother. My father was against it. He tore apart her amulets, which made her quit. Well, I secretly continued on my own. My motive was very simple which was "The god, please help mother. Please quell father's violence and grant peace to my family," but to me who had loved the god all along, while learning about the god I gradually came to feel, "I must live the kind of life that would please the god, I must be the kind of person who would be of use to the world" before I became aware of it.

I believe that this could be mentioned as my starting point as a person of religion, but at the time I still had only a vague feeling, "I'm going to live the kind of life that would please the god and be that kind of person," but I did not have the slightest concrete idea what path to take in life. What I could do for the time being was contribute to school activities by becoming a member of the student council. On the other hand, when I could spare a moment during my student activities, I still had the childishness of being carried away by catching fish and insects, but with the feeling of wanting to be helpful to people growing stronger, I felt my intuitive power gradually growing sharper. What was strange was that although I instantly responded to and understood the worries of my acquaintances and friends; I could not understand anything about myself, such as what path I should take for the future.

Meanwhile, I failed in the university entrance test and reluctantly started my life as an entrance exam rejectee. With this as a turning point, I started to devour books as I mentioned earlier in this chapter, but one of the books that I read at that time was Takeo Arishima's *Oshiminaku Ai wa Ubau*⁴⁸.

There was a passage⁴⁹ in this novel, "Once in a long while, I was in anguish like Paul, but Paul's distress was not like mine. I was spiritually awakened like Shinran. However, Shinran's spiritual awakening was not like mine." To this day, I have been unable to forget the strong impression I received when I encountered this passage. Paul also was feeling distressed, but his distress was not like mine. Shinran also was spiritually awakened, but he did not suffer like me. I suffered in my own way and would be spiritually awakened in my own way. Takeo Arishima said, that was his start in life, but then, how should I live life? What should I do to live life in my own way? As it was just when I was feeling a deadlock in my entrance exam rejectee life, it affected me the more, but there was another book that was soul-stirring to me. It was *Hatachi no Genten (Starting point at age 20)*⁵⁰ which was written by Etsuko Takano, a Ritsumeikan University student. In this book, she mentions⁵¹, "My starting point at the age of 20 was being alone, and to be immature." Coincidentally at the time I read this book, I was also 20. At the same age of 20, she had already found her

⁴⁸ Arishima, Takeo, *Oshiminaku Ai wa Ubau*, Criticism collection of Arishima Takeo, Shincho Bunko, 2000

⁴⁹ *Oshiminaku Ai wa Ubau*, p250

⁵⁰ Takano, Etsuko, *Hatachi no Genten (Starting Point at Age 20)*, Shincho Bunko, 1979

⁵¹ *Hatachi no Genten (Starting Point at Age 20)*, p 4.

starting point. Her way out was suicide. She chose to kill herself. Unlike her, I was still lost, being unable to find my starting point. I wondered where in the world was my starting point.

Just at that time, I suddenly recalled, "didn't I not think to myself when I was 15, that I was going to live for the god and live a life helpful to people." After all, my starting point was the god. When I was in this state of mind, the book that I read was the Omotokyo⁵²'s *Ofudesaki*. *Ofudesaki* is what the god mentioned about his feeling through Nao Deguchi, the founder of the sect, when she was in a trance. In short, it was the god's words of grief. Worried about the world, the god sent out warnings in various ways, but in spite of his warnings, people acted just as they pleased. Even the kind of people who were determined to seek after truth gave in to worldly desires. The Omotokyo's *Ofudesaki* is a book which depicts the grief of the god who hopes there are people who really live according to his words, who live according to his wishes, and who live with a desire to be helpful to the general good of the world. When I read this book, tears rolled down my cheeks ceaselessly. I could not help but feel sorry for the god.

All that human beings have to do is to live leaning on god. However, either god has nothing to lean on, or human beings do not realize that He is always there to protect them. Yet, god loves human beings whether or not they realize this and keeps on protecting and guiding them. When I came to realize this, I could naturally grasp what a wonderful being god is and what a grueling job he has to do. However, thinking about this, I realized that the same could be said about parents and ancestors, which means that god is a presence like parents and ancestors. Hence, I felt that I must offer my greatest piety and devote my life to god. This is my starting point.

At that time, there were over 5 billion people in the world and over 5 billion ways of lives, but I was determined to live the life that the god desired the most. I wanted this wonderful, wonderful god who loved humanity so much to use my body, my mind and my soul to perform his deeds -- to use my very life to express himself. In the instant that I give myself to this god, I became resolutely sympathetic to the god that appears in *Ofudesaki*. No matter how traumatic life may become, I figured it would always be more meaningful than the suicide that Etsuko Takano chose. I decided, at the age of 20, that my thoughts (standing) of that time, would be my starting point. Since I was 15, I have lived with a determination to live to be helpful to the people of the world, but it was at the age of 20 that I was definitely resolved to live for the god. This was my starting point.

Getting Acquainted with Teachings of the Ancient Sages through Study

I was resolved to live for the god, to live for the good of the world and to live for the people of the world. However, for such objectives, learning, capability and real ability were also

⁵² A Shinto-related new religion that arose near the end of the Meiji Period (1868-1912). Nao Deguchi, a widow of a carpenter in Ayabe, Kyoto Prefecture, became obsessed, and she made prophecy, which was referred to as "*ofudesaki*." Subsequently, Onisaburo Deguchi, the husband of Nao's fifth daughter, organized a religious group as its leader. After World War I, he grew the religious group substantially by implementing mystic end-of-the-world prophecy. Thinking the group confused popular minds, the government strongly suppressed the activities of the religious group, causing a tentative decline of the group. However, teachings of the sect greatly influenced various fields, and even now, many new religious sects maintain some of its thoughts.

⁵³ Deguchi, Nao, *Omoto Shinyu (Ofudesaki)*, Tenseisha, 1983.

necessary. It would not be helpful to the god and to the general good and to the people of the world by merely repeating the words, "For the sake of the god" without having real ability, acceptable to the world and which would not be merely empty talk. To be helpful to the god, the only thing would be to build up my character. For this purpose, the first thing would be to read books. I made up my mind to be a demon for reading more than ever, but I had no idea what kind of book would be pleasing or helpful to the god.

At the time what was constantly on my mind was, what the god do? What could I do to be pleasing to the god? According to what I heard, Emperor Showa lived his life, constantly thinking about what Emperor Meiji would have thought or done if he were living.

It is not that I followed the example of Emperor Showa, but I also thought of what the god would have thought or done, but repeating the name of the god was vague and not helpful in giving me a good understanding. The god is not visible nor can his voice be heard. Still more, there was no way to understand his desires. However, among the historical characters, there must be persons who dedicated their whole life to the god. Or those who have lived protected by the god. I studied the histories of such persons because they must possess a part of the god. I read histories, works, and original texts, if any, of such persons. Then I thought it would be best to think of what these persons would have thought or done if they were living in this age.

First of all, to reflect on what Onisaburo Deguchi⁵⁴ of the Omotokyo would have thought or lived, I then resolutely started to read his works, including *Story of the Spiritual World*⁵⁵. Incidentally, I finished reading the huge 83 volumes of *A Story of the Spiritual World* 2 times. As a result, I felt that it helped me to understand in my own way what Onisaburo had in mind, what kind of person the god who appeared at the Omotokyo was and what was the will of the god.

However, Onisaburo was not everything. There must have been many persons in Japan who, like Onisaburo, lived bearing on their shoulders the desires of the deities and Buddhas. Therefore, what I thought about next was about what Prince Shotoku (Shotoku Taishi)⁵⁶ would have done if he had lived in this age, and I read his works. Then, I thought about what Shinran⁵⁷ would have thought and how he would have lived in this age if he were living; and then, about what Kukai⁵⁸, Saicho⁵⁹, Ippen Shonin⁶⁰, Nichiren⁶¹, Kusunoki Masashige⁶² and

⁵⁴ A person of religion, who strove to launch and establish the Omoto sect as the husband of the daughter of Nao Deguchi, the founder and shaman of the religious group, and he himself was a great shaman. His book of prophecy, entitled *Reikai Monogatari (Story of the Spiritual World)*, had great influence on various fields. Because of this book, not a few people regard him as the greatest person in the religious history of this country.

⁵⁵ Deguchi, Onisaburo, *Reikai Monogatari 1-81-kan (Story of the Spiritual World, Vol. 1-81)*, Tenseisha, 1922.

⁵⁶ A crown prince in the ancient era of Japan (574-622). Being a very clever, wise man, Prince Shotoku made great efforts to develop Buddhism in Japan, building many temples. He is still esteemed by many Japanese people as a man who embodied sacred virtue, as his name (which means the Prince of Sacred Virtue) indicated. Sakamoto, Taro (edited by the Japan Historical Study Society), *Prince Shotoku*, Yoshikawa Kobunkan (Jinbutsu Shosha), 1979.

⁵⁷ A priest in the early part of the Kamakura Period (1185-1333). Personally getting married, he was a man who brought a drastic change to the conventional Buddhism.

⁵⁸ "A representative Japanese Buddhist priest (774-835). He went to China, under the Tang dynasty, and learned the essence of Buddhism there. After returning to Japan, he inaugurated the Shingon sect. Being excellent not

Oda Nobunaga⁶³ (though he wasn't dedicate to the gods, he was determined to live his own life on the precept that all men die, and so he was hero.) would have done and so on... I read through the books and biographies of the important persons who left their names in Japanese history one after another. By reading these books, I have been able to grasp the outline of the religions and ideas that have formed the culture of Japan.

However, deities and Buddhas have not appeared only in Japan. Deities also have appeared in foreign countries, protecting and guiding people. What do these foreign deities think and what do they desire? Next, what would Buddha have thought and lived, if he had lived a student's life here in Nishinomiya⁶⁴, Japan, like me. What would have Jesus thought and lived? What about Michelangelo, Nietzsche and Swedenborg. In this manner, I gradually widened my knowledge.

The persons whom I had contact with until then were, first of all, my parents, younger brother and younger sister. My uncle and aunt, and further, my school friends and neighbours at the most. The religious teachers and religious seniors were a little bit unique. In other words, my world of mind and awareness was very limited. However, I was able to encounter Prince Shotoku, Buddha, Jesus and Confucius and Taoism through study, and through *Ofudesaki* and the god who appeared to Nao Deguchi through the works of Onisaburo Deguchi

Through my study of history and learning, I was able to gain knowledge of the way of life of Prince Shotoku, of Kukai and Saicho who lived in the Heian period, of the way Shinran, Ippen and Nichiren lived in the Kamakura period, and further of the way the great characters of China, India and Europe lived. Whenever I felt a touch of air produced therefrom, I constantly wondered what these persons would have done if they were living here in Japan.

As I happened to first enter a Shintoist religious organization, I studied the way of living of the great ancient and modern characters of the East and West starting from Onisaburo Deguchi, but Onisaburo Deguchi was always in the centre. However, the teachings of the

only in Buddhism but also in Chinese poems, calligraphy, civil engineering, and construction, he was known as a man of most versatile talents.

⁵⁹ A great Buddhist priest (767~822), who represented Japanese Buddhism, together with Kukai. Founder of the Tendai sect. When the origins of many existing religious schools are examined, we reach this Buddhist leader, in many cases.

⁶⁰ A priest in the middle years of the Kamakura Period (1185~1333). Belonging to the Buddhist sect that stemmed from the same school as Shinran's, this priest devoted his life to mental rescue of the public.

Ohashi, Toshio (edited by the Japan Historical Study Society), *Ippen*, Yoshikawa Kobunkan (Jinbutsu Sosho), 1983.

⁶¹ A priest living in the middle of the Kamakura Period (1185~1333). He was known for his strong adherence to the Lotus Sutra, and for attacking other Buddhist factions that worshipped other religious sects.

⁶² A warlord in the period of the Northern and Southern Dynasties (1336~1392), who is still popular even now for his actions faithful to his master (one of the emperors).

⁶³ A warlord (1534~1582), who attained great success in the warring state, almost conquering the entire Japanese land. He was known as not a simple samurai general but a revolutionary reformer who established unique systems one after another, based on creativity and wits.

⁶⁴ The city of Nishinomiya in Hyogo Prefecture. A city located to the west of Osaka. The birthplace of the writer of this document.

Omotokyo were, so to speak, like a university, possessing too many elements, making it difficult to see the core. It was hard to grasp the essence no matter how hard you studied, just like peeling a scallion, making it difficult to understand the content of the deep learnings accumulated by Onisaburo Deguchi. Of course, I read all of Onisaburo Deguchi's works. However, it was difficult for me to see the core, only being attracted to the width of his ideology, perhaps because the scale was too large. There was no yardstick to better understand him or the will of the god who appeared at the Omotokyo through him. Perhaps I should say that we have not been able to encounter an ideology or character who could be a yardstick for this.

The Starting Point of Faith

It was at the age of 25 that I entered Religious House Red Manji Group⁶⁵ because they say, in Omotokyo, it is a religion in which the same god as Omotokyo appears. Their group was closely tied to Omotokyo. Furthermore, it takes a more systematic study of Classics to understand the depth of those teachings. Here, I frantically studied Chinese Classics including the Four Books and the Five Classics. I studied hard devoting every spare moment, at home and on the train, with the classics constantly in my hand. As a result, the knowledge, which melted into a whole in my mind, was sorted and rearranged making it possible for me to clearly see the will of the god.

Of courses, it is needless to mention the method of studying Chinese classics, such as thinking of what Confucius, Wang Yang-min⁶⁶ and Zhu-ge Liang⁶⁷, would have done if they were living. By the method of study mentioned above, I was able to learn how the great philosophers who appeared in Chinese history lived and was able to actually feel a spiritual contact with them through their biographies and works.

Here, I do not have time to introduce Chinese ideology and philosophy in detail nor do I have the time to talk about the process for knowing the will of the god with Chinese classics as a key to it, but another thing that I have been able to learn through Chinese classics is that it is possible to make one's resolution as firm as a rock to live the path of the god. This was also a very great epoch making incident for me in life.

To cite an example, there is Confucianism, which represents the ideology and philosophy of China, but how many are there who have an accurate understanding of the essence of Confucianism which has Confucius as its founder? When reading *the Analects of Confucius*⁶⁸ such expressions as "Fine words and an insinuating appearance are seldom associated with true virtue"⁶⁹ "Learning without thought is labor lost; thought without learning

⁶⁵ A new religious group which follows a belief similar to Taoism. It was originated in the Mainland China in the 20th century and is headquartered in Hong Kong, Tokyo, Taiwan now.

⁶⁶ A Confucian in the Ming period of China, whose thoughts greatly contributed to the occurrence of the Meiji Restoration in Japan.

⁶⁷ Premier in Shu (also called Shu Hang) during the Period of Three Countries in China. Helped Liu Bei establish the state of Shu. Known for his ability to consider judicious steps one after another.

⁶⁸ *The Analects of Confucius*, Iwanami Bunko, 1963. *The Analects of Confucius*, Tachibana Kyoyo Bunko, 2000.

⁶⁹ *The Analects of Confucius*, Chapter 1, Verse 3.

is perilous⁷⁰ or "To see what is right and not to do it is want of courage⁷¹" catches the eyes. What did Confucius who left behind such numerous words ultimately say and teach? Some people say that Confucius taught benevolence. Or some assert that he taught propriety while some say that he did not teach his teachings, but only taught the virtues of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and faith which were passed down from ancient times. What they say is true. Everything they say is not mistaken.

However, it is my opinion that rather than ultimately desiring to teach, couldn't he have desired to make efforts to take the path to become a sage? For example, at the beginning of *the Analects*, his words, "Is it not pleasant to learn with a constant perseverance and application? Is it not delightful to have friends coming from distant quarters?"⁷² are introduced, but when reading his words, "Is it not pleasant to learn with a constant perseverance and application," to consider what Confucius studied, he did not learn knowledge that is taught at school. The path to being a sage. This is what he studied, making efforts to improve himself.

For instance, this is vividly expressed in the words, shown in *the Analects*, "Such was Hui that for three months there would be nothing in his mind contrary to perfect virtue." Confucius' follower, Hui did not stray from the path of virtue for 3 months, that is, he did not stray from the path of virtue for a long period of time. He lived in a poor partitioned house and lived on only a handful of rice and water. Yet Hui always wore a smile on his face and enjoyed himself without straying from the path of virtue. What did Hui enjoy?

Zhou Lian-xi⁷³, refers to this in *Kinshiroku* saying that "Hui was enjoying the path to becoming a sage." A sage, in other words, is a sage who possesses the 3 elements, an emperor of ancient times, a politician and a man of virtue. Hui was enjoying the path to become a sage. Learning is not to study $1+1=2$. Learning is to study the path to become a sage. To study such learning is a delight. They say that this was the reason why Hui always wore a smile on his face. With such an understanding, we can very well understand Confucius' words: "Is it not pleasant to learn with a constant perseverance and application? Is it not delightful to have friends coming from distant quarters?" It is a delight to study the path to become a sage and there is nothing so delightful as to drink sake with a friend while talking about the path of virtue.

While making this comment, Confucius tells himself, "Is he not a man of complete virtue, who feels no discomposure though men may take no note of him?"⁷⁴ The world does not recognize him, who is walking on the path to becoming a sage, and accumulating scholastic achievements. The world is not aware of the fact that he is a person who has cultivated himself to become a man of virtue with accumulated learning. He has studied hard and has cultivated himself to become a man of virtue, but the people of the world are not aware of

⁷⁰ *The Analects of Confucius*, Chapter 2, Verse 15.

⁷¹ *The Analects of Confucius*, Chapter 2, Verse 24.

⁷² *The Analects of Confucius*, Chapter 1, Verse 1.

⁷³ A scholar in the period of the Sung dynasty in China. He became a Chinese government official without sitting for the civil service examination. He did not rise in rank within the Chinese government but was committed to his studies, despite his poverty. Usually referred to as the ancestor of Sung studies.

⁷⁴ *The Analects of Confucius*, Chapter 1, Verse 1.

this. However, he must not feel resentment nor feel sad. He is not taking this path to be recognized by the world nor for honour and fame. He is walking this path persistently and silently conforming to the path of the god and the invisible path. He who is living such a life is a noble character.

Confucius also said, "A transmitter and not a maker, believing in and loving the ancients, I venture to compare myself with our old P'ang"⁷⁵. The teachings have not been created by him, and he has no intention to newly create teachings. He said, "believing in and loving the ancients, I venture to compare myself with our old P'ang." The path of the sages passed down from ancient times was not created by him; in other words, the teaching was laid out by him. He liked the path of ancient sages, and while explaining the path to others, he was only quietly comparing himself with old P'ang. It is said that old P'ang was a person something like Confucius' teacher and comparing himself with this person, Confucius constantly self-examined himself. "A transmitter and not a maker, believing in and loving the ancients, I venture to compare myself with our old P'ang." These are indeed wonderful words.

This is Confucius' attitude towards study. I also feel delight in having contact with ancient people I have gotten acquainted with through study, with people who have passed away, with people having received certain blessings from the god, and have spiritual exchanges with them while talking with them through their works, and I am cultivating my talent and improving my real ability with these persons as my models, being considerate towards all, and live according to the god's will, but the world knows nothing about this, nor do they evaluate this. However, I am improving myself, calmly without resentment or sadness, because I am not living this way for honour, or to receive acknowledgment from all, or to have everybody notice my conduct.

"In ancient times, men learned with a view to their own improvement. Nowadays, men learn with a view to the approbation of others"⁷⁶. These are also the words of *the Analects*. What is meant by "In ancient times, men learned with a view to their own improvement" is that they studied to cultivate their minds, while "Nowadays, men learn with a view to the approbation of others" refers to scholars who do not study to cultivate themselves but study only worrying about public estimation. However, Confucius was not one of them. He was not studying to gain good reputation or to make a parade of his knowledge. He was studying for cultivation of the mind. This is the basic of Confucius' learning. When I studied this philosophy, I was determined to carry through the same manner of life and for almost 30 years, I believe I have carried through the way of living in accordance with the god's will for the general good of the world by improving my real ability and talent, performing welfare activities, based on the teachings of Confucius.

It was not a matter of concern to me whether or not the world recognized this. Regardless of what people might think, I continued to study hard without a day's rest for 365 days a year, 24 hours a day, on Sundays, New Year's Day, irrespective of holidays. Of course, my attitude this time will not change. I intend to continue improving myself until immediately before my death. It is my feeling that this is the most wonderful way of living in the sense of improving the spirit.

⁷⁵ *The Analects of Confucius*, Chapter 7, Verse 1.

⁷⁶ *The Analects of Confucius*, Chapter 14, Verse 25.

People who are scholars in the real sense, are not concerned about what people, including other Shinto people, and what other religious people think. What people think is altogether irrelevant. No matter what kind of age this is, it is a matter of no concern. To live a life, which you can pride with people who are living a wonderful life religiously, studying for their own cultivation of mind is idyllic for the living artist. To live a life that you can take pride in, thinking of what characters of the East and West, who lived a wonderful way of life would do if they were living, should be true learning.

Therefore, when you are at a loss on the path to take, think of what path the god, Onisaburo, Prince Shotoku, Jesus, Mahommed, and Confucius from Asia and, in the case of Europe, Swedenborg would have taken. If you thought Swedenborg would have taken such and such a path, then think what Swedenborg would have thought at such a time and return to the original point, because that point is the root of my study and faith.

The Path Taken as a Spiritually Awakened Person

As I mentioned earlier, the starting point of my life was when, at the age of 20, I came in contact with *Ofudesaki* of the Omotokyo and feeling sorry for the god, I was resolved to offer my whole life to the god. I also mentioned earlier that my intuitive power became sharper after I made my resolution. Now, to mention the condition of my intuitive power after that, it has improved increasingly, making it possible for me to give advice to my acquaintances and friends. When I pray hard for them, I not only feel a flash of inspiration which tells me, "It would be more advisable to give the person advice in so and so manner," but I also have been able to foresee the person's future. At the same time, I gradually came to understand the feelings of others.

This was, in a manner of speaking, the budding of my supernatural power, but it came out gradually, and not all of a sudden, one day through divine revelation in a trance-like state. In the first place I had never wanted to become a possessor of a supernatural power or become a medium. In that respect, I only wanted to be an ordinary person. On the contrary, as mentioned earlier, after I made a resolution at the age of 20, my supernatural power was gradually sharpened. Perhaps this was because I was drawing a little nearer to the spirit of the god, but it is only when I offer prayers for others with love in my heart that my supernatural power or intuitive power functions correctly. When it involves my own matter or gains and losses, my intuitive power never turns out right. Having experienced this, I have almost never prayed for myself.

It was at the age of 23 that I first saw my guardian spirit. It was a time when Jiro Tsunoda⁷⁷'s comic strip of *Ushiro no Hyakutaro*⁷⁸ was popular. I was not very much interested, but I turned the pages of the book my friend had with him and found an article, "how to meet your rear guardian spirit". I doubted this, but I gave it a try and prayed as instructed in the book.

"My guardian spirit who guides and protects me, if you really exist, please show me yourself. If you think that I would stray from the path of virtue, only having interest in a questionable world, please do not show me yourself. Yet, if you think it would be all right to show me

⁷⁷ A Japanese cartoonist.

⁷⁸ Tsunoda, Jiro, *Ushirono Hyakutaro (Hyakutaru Remaining Behind)*, Kodansha, 1974-76.

yourself to a certain extent, then please show me yourself. If you judge that it would be better for this boy to show yourself, please show me yourself." Before I went to bed, I prayed as instructed in the comic book. As I was considerably advanced in my study at the time, I was aware that I would be hurt by some questionable spirit, but when I prayed saying "I will leave it to your judgment," I momentarily felt a light and soft sensation and my real guardian spirit came into full view. This is when I had my first flash of enlightenment.

Now, to explain what I saw then, many people were standing in a line. When popular game software like "Dragon Quest" is sold, people line up, but numerous people were lined up just as when game software is sold and moreover, this line meandered. A tremendous number of people were filed up in a line. Every one of the people in the line was wearing different national costumes. Some wore Shinto priest costumes. Some were dressed in the ceremonial robes of the Japanese court and some in Chinese dresses. Some were wearing costumes of the Middle and Near East. It was just like watching Mallow Festival ⁷⁹parade.

I was surprised to see a face resembling Oda Nobunaga⁸⁰ at the end of the line of hundreds of people. He looked very much like Oda Nobunaga in the school history textbook, but his face was pale. I thought, "Wow! His face is pale! Really, what a lot of guardian spirits⁸¹! I recovered my senses, but it was then that I heard a voice. "When you are 25, I will change places with a terrific guardian spirit." I asked, "What do you mean by a terrific guardian spirit?" "I can't tell you that." "For example, what kind of person is he? At least tell me what kind of person he is." "For example, a person like Kobo Daishi." He left saying that it is not Kobo Daishi but a person like Kobo Daishi. This happened when I was 23. It was the third year after I had made a decision to live life for the god.

It was after this first flash of enlightenment that I began hearing the god's voice faintly. After that, with the deepening of my state, I gradually came to hear the voice of the god clearly. I also saw him occasionally. When I was approaching the age of 25, I had mastered almost all of the supernatural powers, such as the 6 great supernatural powers as referred to in Buddhism, that is, Tengan (clairvoyant eyes), Tenji (clairvoyant ears), Jita (oneself and others), Unmei (destiny), Shukumei (karma) and Rojin (leakage). I felt that I was able to sufficiently perform delicate skills in asking the will of the god.

Only, as mentioned earlier, these supernatural powers were persistently effective for people and when it came to me the individual, these were completely useless. I prayed hard when my company was in desperate straits due to difficulty in financing, but the only response I received was, "Yes, I see. You must be having a bitter time. I understand how hard it is on you, but get over it by your efforts. Do your best!" and I received no helping hand. The god who guards me is indeed an unsympathetic god. However, no matter how unsympathetic, I have been able to improve my spirit in my own way by his guidance and I was able to

⁷⁹ A festival in Kyoto, which shows the peer-class culture in the Heian Period.

⁸⁰ See footnote 63.

⁸¹ Guardian spirits are the existence in the spirit world. The basic job of the guardian spirits is to help bring happiness to human beings and to help them to live in accordance with Heaven's plan for each individual. A person's guardian spirit holds principal responsibility for encouraging his personal spiritual development in virtue, through the vehicle of education. The average person has between ten and fifteen of them. In extreme cases a person may have forty, fifty or even more guardian spirits hovering around him. (cf. Toshu, Fukami (Haruhisa, Handa), *Spiritual Purification*, Tachibana-publishing, 1992.)

improve my spiritual intuition. My intuition, inspiration, flash of inspiration, supernatural power, psychic power, are all gifts I received from the god. I believe that I owe my music composition, painting, calligraphy, and inspiration that always arises whenever I concentrate, to the power I have received from the god.

What Is Real Supernatural Power

I would like to touch a little bit on Buddha's definition of real supernatural power.

In this world, there are things that are not visible or audible to ordinary persons and there are many people who are persons with the so-called supernatural power or medium. I am one of them, but it is too short-sighted and dangerous to think that possessing supernatural power or medium is a wonderful thing. The reason being that among these supernatural powers and psychic powers, there are many questionable powers and actually there are numerous unfortunate instances only because the persons possessed this supernatural power. Mentioning supernatural power or psychic power in a word, there are true powers and false powers.

What then are true supernatural power and true psychic power – the so-called supernatural power (divine power)? With respect to this matter, Buddha decidedly said that the "preaching supernatural power" is the true supernatural power. Then, what is this "preaching supernatural power"? This word can be looked up in the Buddhism dictionary. The intuitive power that results from accumulated efforts, that is, efforts made over and over again is true supernatural power. Such supernatural power as derived from human efforts is what Buddha called "preaching supernatural power"⁸². According to his theory, walking on the surface of water, producing things from space where there is nothing, plucking a flower in half, bending a spoon would not be supernatural power.

The reason why Buddha expressly defined supernatural power was because in his days there was Brahmanism, where walking on fire and stabbing needles into the flesh were considered proof of ascetic practices. To admonish such a trend, Buddha said that these were not true powers and mentioned that a true power is the intuitive power that is produced through efforts as human beings, efforts made over and over again. This is true supernatural power.

When I first touched on Buddha's definition, I felt like I was awakened to the truth. Up to then, I had never wanted to be a medium, but yet when I saw a mysterious medium, I felt the person must be a terrific person, he must have the power to freely use the power of the god, and somewhere in my mind I was struck with awe. However, Buddha said that this was not true power and anything like that which is awe-inspiring is not true power. I cannot forget to this day the surprise and deep impression that I felt when I learned that such power was not true power.

What does Buddha concretely mean by intuitive power produced when a human being accumulates efforts, makes efforts over and over again and increases efforts further?

⁸² Edited by Nakamura, Hajime, et al., *New Buddhism dictionary enlargement edition*, Seishin Shobo, 1980, p106□107.

Interpreting this in my own way, it is my belief that what contributes to the living of people, to culture, art, religion and welfare could be true supernatural power.

In brief, all that is needed is the necessary part to be visible or audible when so required. When visible and audible, a person's awareness is drawn to what can be seen or what can be heard, and efforts to be made as a human being or spiritual training, for which a person is born are forgotten. This is the reason Buddha defined that intuitive power, produced when a human being accumulates efforts, makes efforts over and over again and increases efforts further, is true power. Secluding oneself in the mountains, meditating, and chanting spells in order to gain supernatural power is not right. Supernatural power acquired with a desire to do so is not true power and the supernatural power so acquired belongs to the world of demons and cannot be mentioned as of being of a high level.

Even if it does not belong to the world of demons, such a supernatural power would not be useful in actual life. All it can do is amaze people. The existence of any such thing is meaningless. In the first place, Michelangelo, Raphael and Leonardo da Vinci also had this level of supernatural power. To mention Swedenborg, he was a person of supernatural power, such that he went back and forth between this world and the other world. However, these people did not stay on the same level but each made efforts to devote themselves to their faith and applied to, and made use of, their supernatural powers in the fields of science, art and politics. They made use of their powers in life, linking them to the welfare of people. It would be like blowing my own horn, but in my case also, as my intuitive power has been gradually sharpened as a result of efforts made over and over again, my power can also be utilized in any field such as work, art and education.

After all, supernatural power or psychic power should be made useful in creation of art, advancement of learning, improvement of welfare and realization of happiness of people by the united efforts of human beings and invisible spiritual power. If supernatural power is this kind of power, it can be mentioned as being a true power in the spiritual world, but as there would be no improvement of spirit as a human being by supernatural power acquired with an intention to acquire it or with an intention to show it off to people, it can be judged as belonging to the world of demons. Attention must not be drawn to questionable things because there is no true development of the spirit, if such things are relied upon. Further, a religion that publicizes itself, using mysterious things, cannot be considered a true religion. When mentioning religion, what is important is a universal religious nature and any religion that forgets this, startles and threatens people is definitely not a religion. Couldn't this be read from Buddha's definition?

Encounter with Buddha

I will speak about another episode regarding Buddha.

I feel nobody would believe me if I mentioned this and I do not mind it if anybody doubted me, but as a matter of fact when I was 40, Buddha's spirit appeared to me. This does sound quite questionable. However, I would gain nothing by telling a lie.

To relate this as it actually happened, on April 8th, my birthday, Buddha suddenly appeared to me and standing before me, he mentioned,

"Truth may be studied deeply and widely. You need not worry how wide the subjects you studied and acquired would spread in the world, or how much would remain in history. Leave this up to the god. You must make efforts to earnestly probe truth as deeply and widely as possible from every angle. By doing so, as a result it will be transmitted widely and for a long while. If spread unnaturally, the true colours would show immediately."

At that time, I was up against a wall just as I had been at the age of 20. The wall was my concern about how was I to transmit to people what I had studied and acquired. I concentrated on cultivating myself earnestly towards the path to become a sage ever since I made a resolution to live life for the god at the age of 20. In a manner of speaking, it was the god's gift to me for having earnestly lived thinking only of the god, giving up my personal desires, but if I could convey this to the people of the world, how many people could become happy? When thinking about this, I felt a desire to convey this to people as early as possible... However, I felt impatient, I got nowhere and I only kept wavering in my mind.

It was at such a time that Buddha appeared to me and gave me the following message. This happened on April 8th, 1991 on the day of "kanbutsue" (the anniversary of Buddha's birth).

Incidentally, it was Prince Shotoku who set up "kanbutsue"⁸³ and "urabone"⁸⁴ (the Bon Festival). Prince Shotoku, who intended to rule Japan by the power of Buddhism, a foreign religion, in the form of overcoming the opposition of the people who tried to protect Japan's hereditary religion – the religion now referred to as Shintoism, established "kanbutsue" and "urabone." However, an account remains in history that Japan's various deities were worshipped in high esteem and people visited the shrines such as the Miwa Shrine⁸⁵ and Sumiyoshi Shrine in a flurry, because the huge earthquake that occurred immediately after this caused the people to wonder if the anger of ancestors was aroused by Prince Shotoku's intention to rule Japan by Buddhism.

Apart from this, the people in their 40's were able to overcome the difficulty by the message from Buddha, but I am afraid that people in their 50's, 60's and 70's, might feel a big wall is in the way of their future at the stages which mark their life. Even in case of such a situation, it is my hope that we are able to continue to improve our spirit to the day we die, bravely surmounting such difficulties as did Hakuin⁸⁶ and Rinzai⁸⁷.

Learning the Spirit of Hakuin, a Rinzaï Sect Monk

I experienced contact of souls with many people through studies, and among these people, the monk Hakuin, a person who taught me the most important matters for a man.

⁸³ Buddha's birthday festival held on April 8.

⁸⁴ The Buddhist event held around July 13–15 according to the lunar calendar, to rescue family souls from hardship.

⁸⁵ One of the Japan's oldest shrines, located in the city of Sakurai, Nara Prefecture.

⁸⁶ A Zen monk (1685–1768) in the middle of the Edo Period (1600–1868). A renowned monk, who had advanced learning and rich knowledge about paintings, and was often called the reviver of the Rinzaï sect. *Rinzaï-roku*, Tachihana Kyoyo Bunko, 2000.

⁸⁷ A Zen monk (? ~ 867), in the Tang period of China. Founder of the Rinzaï sect.

Zen master Hakuin was known as the restorer of Rinzai Zen, and it is said that, without the appearance of Hakuin, the sect would not have spread as far as it has. His character was something like a flame. He never allowed any compromise in religious training, and pushed himself to the hardest place, conducting the severest training of all by himself. Thus, he was one of the greatest men in Japanese Buddhist history. It may be proper to regard him as a man who lived only for the ideal. As indicated in his statement, "I attained major enlightenment seven or eight times, and minor enlightenment on innumerable occasions"⁸⁸, he repeatedly awakened to the truth, enhancing his mental depth each time. When we trace the footsteps of his life, we encounter moving event after moving event. However, the greatest thing we should learn from him must be the method of his dying.

One day, when he was about 80, Hakuin was lying in bed because of a cold. Until that time, he had never taken to bed simply because of a cold, so while thinking that man could not stop the progress of age, and that his own vigour and health were deteriorating, Hakuin was dozing off, and without knowing when, he entered a dream world. While feeling at a loss at the view of an unknown place, he saw great masters: Rinzai, Dogen, Daito Kokushi and Obaku, who had attained enlightenment and contributed to the spread of Zen, appearing one after another, and inviting him to come to their place immediately. Viewing such a sight, Hakuin shouted loudly, "I will not yet enter your group. I will not yet go to your place, no I won't!" Then, the senior masters laughed in unison, and subsequently, one of them said, "I will teach you the most important thing in the world." "What is it?" asked Hakuin. "The most important thing is bravery. It is most important."

Upon hearing this, Hakuin awoke, and remarking, "Bravery, I understand," he stood up from his bed, gathering his disciples and starting a question-and-answer session again. For five to six years, he made rounds of Zen temples nearby, moving his old body at the age of more than 80. In this way, he gave lectures at these temples, educated his disciples, drew pictures and wrote calligraphy^{89,90}.

As for the final moment of his life, a loud voice: "Ka-tsu!" was heard from the room of Hakuin's daily living, so disciples who were surprised at the voice gathered in the room, and there Hakuin died with his hand raised^{91,92}. He did not forget the mind to seek enlightenment, and he maintained himself as a monk in Zen training to the very final moment.

The state of his death, as well as his desperate courage, forgetting his own safety, these represented the supreme method of living. I wish to serve the purpose of god as long as I live, strive for progress and improvement of my soul, endeavour in my work, inspire and motivate people and engage in artistic activities, while following the model of Hakuin. Because this was also my starting point at age 20, I would like to remember the word bravery as Hakuin did, carry myself through the desired course, pursue such management, religion, arts and new products that nobody sought, and when my life is to end, burn out in a cry of "Ka-tsu!" — there by dying.

⁸⁸ Izusan, Kakudo, *Hakuin Yasenkanna*, Shunjyusha, 1983, p111.

⁸⁹ Akira, Suganuma, *Words of Eisai and Hakuin*, Yuzankaku, 1986, p196-198

⁹⁰ Rikugawa, Taiun, *Historical investigation of Hakuin*, 1963, 436-437, 530-531, 532-533.

⁹¹ Nishibe, Bunjyo, *Anecdote of Zen monk*, Tankosha, 1980, p203-204.

⁹² Edited by Zen Bunka Kenkyusho, *Anecdote of Zen Buddhism*, Zen Bunka Kenkyusho, 1987, 97-98.

The dying method of Zen master Rinzai was also remarkable. While giving recognition of spiritual enlightenment of a disciple in anticipation of his imminent death, Rinzai said, "I wouldn't like to see the face of such a disciple as you. There has been no one that was so poor at self-enlightenment. If you had not been here, Buddhism would have been all right. Oh, there is no one who is as unhappy as I"⁹³. Leaving these words, Rinzai left for another world. If the expression of his recognition of the degree of enlightenment was this, someone may consider that the disciple who received it was greatly shocked. In reality, however, that expression was the supreme praise in the world of Rinzai Zen, and it was thought that there were no more words considerate to the disciple and thankful to him. In other words, Rinzai gave recognition to his disciple in the most paradoxical expression. He meant: "There was no more wonderful disciple than you. Because you reached the state of enlightenment, I can rest assured. Because of your presence, Japanese Buddhism will be all right. Please take care of things after my death." And how did Rinzai die, after giving such a paradoxical recognition? He died while sitting neatly. This dying method is referred to as "zabo" (sitting death).

And the dying method of Daito Kokushi⁹⁴, another master monk, was also impressive. He was a Zen sect monk in the latter half of the Kamakura period, and he was known for opening the Daitokuji Temple. After attaining enlightenment, he lived below a bridge for as many as 20 years. Because he was a man of such strong determination, his calligraphy was full of power. His calligraphic letters appear to be about to move at any moment. In his old years, that monk, Daito Kokushi, became unable to walk because of leg trouble. But at the last moment, Daito Kokushi spoke to his knees, "Thus far, I have listened to you, but at the last instant, do as I instruct." And hardly had he said this, but he forcibly bent his knees. Because he bent his legs, which had been unmovable, his legs were smeared with blood. Paying no attention to such a state of his legs, Daito Kokushi sat in Zen meditation, and he passed away in that state. This was the end of Daito Kokushi⁹⁵.

Tesshu Yamaoka⁹⁶ is another person who died during religious contemplation. Tesshu, who helped the success of Meiji Restoration as a background figure, serving as the chamberlain for Emperor Meiji for a long time after the Meiji Restoration, was a person who refined himself with Japanese fencing. He also trained himself through Zen Buddhism and the state of mind attained through the training of Japanese fencing and Zen, as well as his loyalty to the Emperor, was reported to be highly significant. He died of stomach cancer. Just prior to his death, Yamaoka rose, by concentrating the final strength of his body (which surprised those sitting around him), sat in a *zazen* (sitting, meditative style), bowed toward the Imperial

⁹³ *Rinzairoku*, Iwanami Bunko, 1989, □211. Omori, Sogen, *Rinzairoku Lecture*, Shunjyusya, 1983, p360. Yamada, Mumon, *Rinzairoku*, Kobunsha, p446□448.

⁹⁴ A Zen monk (1282~1337), who cut a prominent figure during the latter period of the Muromachi Period (1185~1333) and the period of the Southern and Northern Dynasties.

⁹⁵ Nishibe, Bunmyo, *Anecdote of Zen monk*, Tankosha, 1980, p80□81, p86□87. Hakuin, Ekaku (notes by Yoshizawa, Katsuhiko), *Complete works of Hakuin Zenji volume.3*, Zen Bunka Kenkyusho, 1999, p84□86. Hirano, Sojyo, *Guide to Zen 4*, Kodansha, 1994, p13, p22□23.

⁹⁶ A statesman and master fencer (1836~1888), who was active during the final years of the Edo period and the early phase of the Meiji Period. He was a chief player in the Meiji Restoration. He learned the essence of Japanese fencing through experience, practiced Zen training, and showed talent in calligraphy.

Palace⁹⁷, joined his hands and died in that posture, after taking a few breaths⁹⁸. While dying in the sitting form is referred to "zabo," the method of dying in a sitting meditation posture is called "zadatsu" (meditative posture death). To close one's life through this "meditative posture death," like Daito Kokushi and Teshu Yamaoka, is a feat unattainable unless the person has made great determination.

As long as a person has a body, that person cannot extinguish the flame of his or her desire. In the process of fighting desire, the soul will go on improving. This fight may be conducted through Zen or Japanese fencing, but no matter which may be the stage of fighting, the attitude to fight must be maintained up to death. All of Hakuin, Rinzai, Daito Kokushi and Teshu Yamaoka seemingly intended to show, by their death to the people of the later world, that the attitude of carrying through the fight to the last is real life. I, as a Japanese, would like to live the remaining portion of my life while considering them as my models.

The Course as a Businessman

I was 26 when I first started up a business. It was six years after I made up my mind to live on the road for god, and to devote my whole life to god. During that time, I studied more vigorously than the words "hard study" would suggest, and deepened my learning and spiritual sense, as I explained earlier. About one year before I launched my business, however, I encountered Ms. Aiko Uematsu, my mentor in the field of religion.

Because the tale will become lengthy if I start it, I will omit it here, but although Ms. Uematsu has an almost unrivalled spiritual sense, she is not a person of religion. She was a common housewife in the upper class, living in the high-rank residential zone in the Yamanote area in Tokyo. This was the difference from Nao Deguchi of Omotokyo, who heard the voice of god while suffering from difficulties of life, but Ms. Uematsu is a shaman, having much sharper spiritual sense than Nao Deguchi. I immediately noticed it. The instant I saw her for the first time, my intuition told me "this person must be prepared by god for you," so I thought, "the god instructed me to study through this person."

So, I immediately obtained her permission to become her disciple, and at the same time, I resigned, based on my own request, from the company in which I was employed. Entering the home of Ms. Uematsu, where her husband and her two children were living, I commenced my training as her disciple. Within only several days, I found that my intuition was right. Casual words coming from the lips of Ms. Uematsu turned out to be the truth piercing through heaven and earth.

As I stated earlier, Ms. Uematsu is a housewife of a commonplace home. She did not particularly learn religious philosophy, nor was she versed in Chinese classics. In these respects, I, her disciple, was superior by several stages, or scores of stages, or hundreds of stages. During that period, I was confident that I knew all philosophies based on reading classics of all areas and all times, as well as direct exchanges of souls with saints and wise men. In other words, I thought I grasped 99 percent of the spiritual world. However, I could not understand the remaining one percent. Because I thoroughly studied Chinese classics at

⁹⁷ The residence of the Emperor, situated in the center of Tokyo.

⁹⁸ Omori, Sogen, *Yamaoka Teshu*, Shunjiyusha, 1983, p22-23. Omori, Sogen, *Sword and Zen*, Shunjiyusha, 1983.

the "Religious House Red Manji Group"⁹⁹, knowledge that was previously confused was sorted out cleanly, but the final one percent, i.e. the mind of god, was not clearly understood at that time.

Regarding the final one percent, Ms. Uematsu disclosed truth readily. I was surprised that truth of the universe, which had been unknown to me, was contained in her words, expressed while she carried out household work, such as preparing meals and cleaning the house. Jumping for joy, I continued daily training. At the same time, I was unable to restrain my desire to convey my joy to someone, so I talked about the matter to my younger brother, younger sister and several juniors of mine at my university.

Thus, Ms. Uematsu's disciples increased to about 10, all at a time, and the life of many other interested persons started. These disciples listened to her words with bright eyes. Thus, we were intoxicated by the word of god spoken through the lips of Ms. Uematsu, but such pleasant training eventually faced a tough barrier. Namely, our rice bins became almost empty. By observing the empty rice bin, we learned for the first time the basic principle of human life (which was known by everyone except us) that, although listening to the tale of god is a pleasure beyond anything else, we cannot live on mist, or while eating nothing.

It was impossible to continue the training life, unless we secured a means to gain income to survive. For that purpose, it might be all right if all members engaged in side jobs, but in that case, it would become impossible to do god-seeking activities. In addition, side-job income would be limited. "What should we do?" After considering various steps, we adopted the thought of establishing our own company, and we set up an enterprise designed to sell products. At that time, I was 26 years old,

As for the products, we sold stationery, office articles, fancy goods, health equipment, foods – we sold anything that could be sold. Even so, because we had no sales routes, all activities were visiting sales or calling-in sales to suitable customers. We went to the wholesale market in Tsukiji and sold health equipment to young male sellers of the market, and we went into fire stations, trying to sell health equipment while massaging shoulders of firemen, who were tired because of their night-shift work. During the sales season near the end of the year, we engaged in calling-in sales with a speaker in one hand, in front of Mitsukoshi Department Store¹⁰⁰ in Ginza¹⁰¹, like a bargain stall salesman. When loudly speaking from morning till night, the throat ached, but I tried to sell the products in front of me frantically. I still vividly remember these scenes. Even now, I am so confident in my ability as a bargain stall salesman that no one will beat me in that action.

By establishing our own company, we managed to secure an income source. However, visiting sales or calling-in sales was a fight of exhaustion, so to speak. Even if we walked around, no sales routes would be established as a result. We must pour our energy into new customer development, and management would not be stabilized at any time. At that time, I was always thinking of converting our enterprise into a company capable of doing route sales.

⁹⁹ See footnote 65.

¹⁰⁰ An old, representative Japanese department store.

¹⁰¹ Japan's highest-class shopping street, located in Tokyo and lined with department stores and famous shops.

It was on such an occasion that my senior at Doshisha University¹⁰² proposed that I start a watch sales agency. It was really a timely offer. I hoped to jump at it, but reconsidering the matter, I forcibly refrained from accepting the offer, or precisely speaking, I had to refrain from accepting it. Apart from other business fields, it was clear that entry into the watch field at that time would result in serious conditions. The watch industry at that time was a representative business field hit by structural recession. Because of efforts to dispose of heaps of unsold inventory, prices bogged down here and there, so there were hardly any profit margins. Therefore, companies were in desperate conditions, and businesses without financial resources were simply waiting to go bankrupt. Entry of my company, which had no fund or corporate history, with bank trust at the lowest possible level, would be like rowing into rough seas aboard a small boat.

However, I might not have a better chance to upgrade visiting sales to route sales, I thought, and I was strongly tempted to accept the offer, finally. However, the watch industry was too dangerous at that time. If it was just me, it would not be so serious a matter even if the company failed, going bankrupt. In that case, I could live by being a bargain stall salesman on the street, and I would be ready to do that. However, I could never make my juniors become homeless.

So I prayed to god, saying, "This case may be a great chance to upgrade our company, but the risks seem too great. For happiness of my juniors, please show me the way to proceed."

I prayed desperately. I continued to do so in a sentiment as if I were standing on a cliff. And the reply was: "The road is not erroneous. Go ahead along that road." Although I lacked strong conviction, thinking that, because god said that, there would be no mistake, I started operation as a watch agency.

However, the reality was rigorous, as was expected. Even if we tried to sell watches, they were not easily sold. Even if they were sold, profit margins were extremely small, so profits could not be secured by any means. Then, how could we secure the company's survival? The only method was to improve my ability as a business administrator, I thought. Even if profit margins were small, I should acquire management ability to secure profits – this was the only way for our company to survive.

I began to study business administration passionately. First, I tackled corporate finances. For me, corporate accounting or financial processing had been matters of a distant world, but there was no room to say that any longer, and I had to learn how to read a balance sheet, and an income statement, frantically. Of course, I poured my whole energy into acquiring new customers, while finding time between my hours of study. Courage and perseverance were necessary for new customer development. If timid sentiment arose, even a little, the mind would be discouraged, and it would become impossible to enter a previously unvisited store. In that case, I remembered the word bravery, with which master Zen monk Hakuin encouraged by his superiors, and walked boldly into the store in question.

¹⁰² A university in Kyoto in 1875, based on the spirit of Christianity. The alma mater of the writer.

Moreover, to learn corporate management techniques to dispose of inventories, to deal with negotiations with banks and to take effective tax countermeasures, I thought I worked harder than others did. As a consequence, I was confident that I reached a fairly good level in a very short period of time. It may be excessively self-confident for me to say this, but I was convinced that I would be defeated by none, as far as management knowledge and techniques were concerned.

Even so, the reality was so severe that it happened, on not a few occasions that I was at a loss because I was unable to make payment, as promised, because of working fund shortages. We had no money, although the time for payment was the following day. The bank account was nil, and the safe was empty. There was no money wherever it was sought. There was no time when I wished more to have supernatural powers. How wonderful it would be if cash poured out when a faucet of running water were turned. How pleased I would be if bank notes flowed out when the door of a refrigerator was opened. Regrettably or naturally, such things never happened.

However, why didn't god help us? When we entered the field of watch business, god had said, "The road is not erroneous. Go ahead along that road." Even so, why should I be so tortured? Was it really not erroneous? Frankly speaking, I held a grudge against god.

I entreated desperately, "You said the road was not erroneous. Then, why won't you extend a helping hand? I was not sabotaging the work I should do. I tried my best, devoting my entire body and soul. Even so, I have no money to pay tomorrow. If you are the omnipotent god, you must be able to produce money from the air or running water easily. At any rate, please help us from this predicament."

Nonetheless, the god who protected me did not say anything on such an occasion. I was not sure whether or not god had heard me. He didn't reply at all. If so, it cannot be helped, and I have to cope with the situation, assuming that I am dead, I thought. After all, it is said that "a real hunter refrains from killing a wretched bird that has flown into his bosom for refuge." "If I cope with the situation in a sincere manner, they will pardon me," I thought, "so, let me take a risk." In order to extend the payment deadline, I went to the supplier, and while kneeling down before the president of the company, I lowered my head repeatedly. Such an action was unbearably hard and miserable, although this may not be understood by anyone who has no such experience. It seemed to cause total destruction of my character. Even so, I had to continue entreaty by prostrating myself in order to protect the company and employees.

"I am so, sorry," I said. "Because I will make payment as soon as possible, please wait for a while. I request your understanding!"

In this way, I touched my forehead to the floor several times, and although there were presidents who accepted my apology and request, others poured all kinds of slander and abuse on me. It was natural. Because their life also depends on receiving money from us, it was natural that they could not show such a generous attitude toward us. On my part, however, it was impossible to go back without success. Although their life depended on getting money, our life was also dependent on my success. I had to protect the life of our employees and their family members by all means. So, I had no other choice but to continue prostration and entreaty.

Although the fight against desire for worldly things was fairly hard, fight against money was the hardest experience for me. It is no exaggeration to say that the agony was something like that if our bodies were cut into eight pieces, and then each of the eight pieces was cut into eight pieces. Such hardship might be a matter of course, since we started from scratch, and we entered an industry in which bankruptcies occurred one after another. Even so, agony related to money was as difficult for me as death itself. How many times did we overcome such desperate scenes? Looking back from now, when we have obtained strong trust by banks, our business has expanded, and our operations have become financially stabilized, such development was like a dream, but anyway, we suffered from agonies and agonies at first.

If I consider the outcome, however, my selection was not incorrect, as god told me. If we entered the most advanced industrial field, such as computer software or IT-related business, at that time, our company probably would have gone bankrupt after a time. Of course, being helped by such a favourable factor as a boom, our operation would have been in good shape at first. Profits could have been secured regardless of whether or not I had management ability. Extremely speaking, a rank amateur could have made profits and acted boastfully as a business administrator. But such a development would be due to a boom, and when the boom ended, the situation could not be orderly. With no knowledge as to steps to be taken, such a manager had to see the decline of his enterprise without doing anything. He might be pitiful, but it would be retribution for his avoidance of hard work – without polishing his management capabilities, such as sales management and financial management skills. The departure of venture business operators, who were once highlighted as popular personalities or lucky business adventurers, from industrial scenes, can be classified under this pattern, in most instances.

In this respect, I was lucky, for I entered a structurally depressed industrial field from the start. There was no other way for survival except to thoroughly raise my management ability.

It was also lucky that god did not help me when I was struggling. If some large money had come in, or if such a miraculous event as my winning a raffle had occurred, in each case of my predicament, I would have made light of management. The ultimate goal of such a mental attitude would be, of course, bankruptcy.

In consideration of this, it appears that god behind me continually guided me over a long span. He seemed to bring me to the limit of possibilities, and to say to me, "Now, attain spiritual enlightenment, and grasp the know-how." In fact, the management know-how developed and acquired based on such toil and tears are serving as the basis for our management consultant business, so this view is considered to be right. Stating while following the pattern of Buddha, my management ability may be described as arising as a result of "making efforts as a human being, doubly making efforts and further accumulating efforts on past efforts." But saying this may be an act of boasting. Even so, it is an undeniable fact that I exerted efforts, efforts and further efforts until now.

Subsequently, whenever I advanced to different business fields, such as preparatory school, publishing business and a travel agency, I broke away from old standards, and succeeded in improving my management ability. Along with this, management of my companies was completely stabilized, so that I can conduct artistic activities to my heart's content. As such, I feel there is no more happiness than this. Soon after I launched a business, I experienced

agony after agony, but now I thank god for his guidance. At present, I am renewing my determination to further strive to develop my companies further.

Nevertheless, corporate management is, in brief, to pursue profits, and its purpose is to gain money. Money has been a representative object disliked and hated by persons of religion since olden times, as a dirty thing staining human souls. Certainly, money has magical power, and if a person makes a wrong decision, he may become a slave to money. If that happens, the situation will be far from training of the soul. Depending on cases, the person concerned may go to hell.

However, when it comes to simply making money, I have some self-confidence. After all, I am a descendant of famous Kansai merchants¹⁰³. If I want, I can make much money, and store it. However, simple money-making does not meet the mind of god. Economic activities in the course of god are nothing but part of training, and it is one means of training the soul.

Notwithstanding this, I was desperately striving to protect the company from business failure soon after its founding, so I had no time to sincerely consider such contradictory matters of god's course and money-making. However, when the company was put on a somewhat stabilized track, and I became financially well off, I had to face the magical power of money. When I faced money, it was hard to avoid the flame of desire -- "I'd like to make more money and live an easier life, eat tasty foods and live in a better house." This may be the whisper of a demon, who tried to seduce Jesus Christ, saying, "If you are God's son, tell these stones to turn into bread¹⁰⁴," and "I will give all this to you, if you will bow down and worship me¹⁰⁵." Jesus Christ said, "No one can live only on food. People need every word that God has spoken¹⁰⁶," ousting the demon. He did not engage in economic activities throughout his life. In that age, it was all right, but the present time is an era of economics. Bread is necessary, and means to obtain bread are also necessary.

How can we obtain bread without any contradiction with the course of god? What methods are there to develop a company without succumbing to the magical power of money? At first, I was unable to find an answer to these questions. At a certain time, however, I obtained a great hint from the living method of Uesugi Kenshin, a warlord in the Warring States period.

The Road of a Business Administrator Learned from Uesugi Kenshin

Uesugi Kenshin¹⁰⁷ was a warlord famous for the battle of Kawanakajima¹⁰⁸, with Takeda Shingen. But did he become a warlord as he hoped to be? The answer was no. He was

¹⁰³ Merchants coming from Osaka, Kyoto, and other areas of Kansai (western parts of Japan). They are well known for skills/excellence in business. Many leaders in Japanese business circles are from Kansai areas.

¹⁰⁴ Matt 4.3 in *The LEARNING BIBLE Contemporary English Version*, American Bible Society, NY, 1995.

¹⁰⁵ Matt 4.9.

¹⁰⁶ Matt 4.4.

¹⁰⁷ A warlord (1530~1578) during the period of warring states. Headquartered in the present Niigata Prefecture. Known for his noble, fastidious spirit. Edited by Hanagamac, Moriaki, *The Encyclopedia of Kenshin Uesugi*, Shin Jinbutsu Orai Sha, 1997.

¹⁰⁸ Several battles fought by Uesugi Kenshin and Takeda Shingen in the suburbs of the present city of Nagano after 1553. Neither scored a decisive victory, with these battles reportedly ending in a draw.

averse to becoming a warlord. Then, what did he want to become? It was a Buddhist priest. Probably, he had strong relations with god or Buddha. Hoping to become a Buddhist priest, and live a course to enlightenment as a Buddhist, even when he was a child, he secretly came out of his house and ran into a temple. Each time he was taken back by his retainers, but his dream to become a priest did not disappear. Subsequently, he tried several times to be a priest, but such action was not allowed by all means. The Uesugi family had a reason he could not be allowed to become a Buddhist priest.

The reason was the problem of the successor. The Uesugi family, which was the house of the military commissioner of the state of Echigo, had the orthodox successor to the position, who was the elder brother of Kenshin. However, this elder brother was in poor health, so he was unable to perform the heavy duties of the military commissioner. In any case, the time was the period of Warring States, and if the military commissioner was either in poor health or a mediocre person, his state would be immediately invaded by adjoining states, and the land would be snatched. To protect the state, a clever and courageous successor was necessary. For the successor, Kenshin, the younger brother, was most appropriate. The great expectation of the entire Uesugi family was put on Kenshin, who showed the atmosphere of a great warlord even as a child. However, Kenshin himself hardly did anything except worship Buddhist statues, and he had no intention to become a military commander. In addition, he ran away from home repeatedly, trying to becoming a priest in a temple. Retainers, who could not tolerate the situation, begged Kenshin, putting their foreheads to the floor around him, saying, "Only you can protect the state of Echigo. Please become a great leader as the successor to the military commissioner."

Kenshin finally gave in.

"It cannot be helped," he thought. "This may be my fate. I want to live on a course to Buddhism. I would like to serve Buddha, who helps people, rather than be a warrior, who has to kill others. However, it was some kind of destiny for me to be born in the era of Warring States. I will become the successor to the military commissioner to protect the residents of Echigo state."

Thus, Kenshin made up his mind to become a warlord, but he could not eliminate his attachment to a course toward Buddhist. Therefore, he shaved his hair, thereby becoming a Buddhist follower, although he remained in a lay position. Of course, he remained unmarried throughout his life. To say accurately, therefore, Uesugi Kenshin was not a warlord. To say forcibly, he was like a priest wearing armour and a helmet, so he was a priest in content, although he was a warlord in appearance.

However, a warrior, who kills and lives in a world of slaughter, where the choice is life and death, and a Buddhist priest, who seeks to rescue people and who argues for mercy, were incompatible, after all. There may be no greater contradiction. Because the same person named Uesugi Kenshin had to perform the two roles at the same time, his inner turmoil must have been great. Reportedly, Kenshin frequently confined himself in a hall of Vaisrdevans (the god of treasure) in the garden of his house and meditated for a whole day. Probably, he must

⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ A warlord (1546~1582) during the period of warring states. Based in present Yamanashi Prefecture, he invaded into adjoining areas using his powerful military force.

have sought god's assistance in dealing with the trouble, groping for a course for solution. What was the world he found as a result of enlightenment? The answer was clear when we examine the method of his fighting.

When we open the historical book concerned, it is stated that Uesugi Kenshin fought 66 battles throughout his life, and he was never defeated. Only the battle of Kawanakajima was a draw -- he won all the other battles. Speaking in a baseball explanation style, he won 65 games out of 66, with one tie. The winning rate was surprising. But the more surprising fact was that the land of Echigo did not grow, although he won so many wars. In the age of Warring States, warriors ran over battlefields to take other warriors' land. It may be no exaggeration to say that they fought battles to obtain new land through victory. However, while Kenshin was the military commissioner of the state of Echigo, the land of Echigo did not increase at all. We should say that this was a very strange development.

Chogoro Kaionji¹¹⁰, the writer of *Ten to Chi to*¹¹¹, a novel depicting the life of Uesugi Kenshin, also wondered why. Originally, he intended to write a bibliography of Takeda Shingen. While he was checking data about the battle of Kawanakajima, however, he noticed the strange characteristic of Uesugi Kenshin. Feeling interest in the development of events, the thoughts of Kenshin and Kenshin's life, he read various data, and as a result he was greatly moved by the humanity of Kenshin. So, eventually, he changed the theme of his novel from Takeda Shingen to Uesugi Kenshin.

As mentioned in his novel, *Ten to Chi to*, Uesugi Kenshin did not fight battles out of the motive to expand the area of his state or to obtain assets. Of course, he defended his land, but he made no aggression, even once. To say the truth, he fought only battles of righteousness. The reason for not being defeated was that, based on righteousness, Vaisrdvans, Acala and the Four Devas: Jikokuten (Dhrtarastra), Zochoten (Virudhaka), Komokuten (Virupaksa) and Tamonten (Vaisravana), protected him, based on righteousness. In this connection, the banner mark of the Uesugi force was the initial Chinese character of the name Vaisrdvans.

These Buddhist gods were war gods who protected persons who fought for righteousness. All the more because Kenshin's sentiment to live for the people of Echigo and retainers of the Uesugi family, while abandoning his personal wish to become a Buddhist priest, met the minds of these war gods, he was always protected, and he never lost a battle.

The time when Uesugi Kenshin lived was the period of Warring States. In contrast, the present is a time unrelated to wars. At least for the past 55 years, Japan fortunately has enjoyed a peaceful era without fighting against any other country. It is rather unusual to say this, but instead of a real war, the war called the economic war is being fought. There may be religionists who consider that any wars, irrespective of real wars and economic wars, are unrelated to the god. That is a fine idea by itself. In the course to the unification of god and man¹¹², which I follow, however, it is an absolute requirement to become an omnipotent person. People must be excellent in economic activities and arts, in addition to religion. With

¹¹⁰ A writer, who mainly wrote historical novels.

¹¹¹ Kaionji, Chogoro, *Ten to Chi to (Heaven and Earth)*, Asahi Shimbun-sha, 1968.

¹¹² Unification of a god and a person. This is a thought unique to Japanese Shinto.

such a thought in mind, I have been engaged in management since the age of 26, and this course of management may not be simple money-making, as I explained earlier. My study theme is how to implement the two kinds of contradictory activities: raising money and following the course of god, non-contradictorily.

However, under Japanese Shinto, on which I place my religious basis, economy and religion are not considered to be contradictory. I will explain this in detail in the next chapter, and as seen in the Shinto prayer, "High Family Status and Prosperity," it is considered, in Shinto, that things helpful in our living are respectable, while those not useful in living are not respectable. With regard to TV, cars, cameras and videos, Japanese people are good at making them smaller and compact, so as to be useful in living. Further, we Japanese are good at incorporating natural beauty in our living. This is true regarding box gardens¹¹³, bonsai¹¹⁴ and "shakkei" (the practice of borrowing nature as a background). Tea ceremony is also partially designed to incorporate natural beauty in a narrow space called "tea rooms." The reason we Japanese are good at these things is that Shinto culture, which regards usefulness in living as respectable, is incorporated in the spirit of Japanese people.

For this reason, as long as people adopt Shinto as their religious backbone, they must be able to engage in economic activities. A typical example was Konosuke Matsushita¹¹⁵, who succeeded in making huge profits, based on the spirit of Shinto. Thus, thoughts of Shinto are not contradictory with economic development, social development and corporate success, but when we see money in actual matters, my mind feels troubled. I was distressed with the issue of how to settle this problem, but I understood the answer when I studied how Uesugi Kenshin lived. Kenshin fought battles for the interest of the people in Echigo, and for righteousness, while abandoning his own wish. Helped by the protective deities in the Buddhist world, he fought 66 battles, and lost none. I considered: "Isn't it all right to adopt Kenshin's thoughts in the current economic war, and to do business for the interest of righteousness? For the time being, I will make money sincerely for the interest of employees and disciples. If I can do this, I will make money for the interest of the area and Japan. Such business must be approvable in the eyes of god." This was the starting point of my business and my career as a business administrator.

It is because of this that I strive to return profits to society as much as possible through welfare activities, if profits are recorded, not to mention paying taxes. Welfare activities are matters to be implemented secretly, so I should not talk much about them, but my efforts of this kind, made as much as possible – with regard to golf by the blind and the construction of an elementary school in China – were solely designed to realize welfare activities.

¹¹³ A small model of a garden in a box in which mud is placed, and tiny wooden/ceramic dolls, houses, bridges, boats, and waterwheels are arranged. The appreciation of such box garden creation techniques became popular in the Edo Period (1600–1886). The art is said to signify an aesthetic sense unique to Japanese people.

¹¹⁴ Potted dwarf trees. Planting and cultivating small trees, etc., on pottery containers, for appreciation of their natural beauty.

¹¹⁵ The founder (1894–1989) of Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., Ltd. (National). Established a small electric equipment company, after studying/working hard despite his poverty, and developed the company into a major enterprise well known throughout Japan, in a short period of time. In Japan, he was referred to as a "god of management."

Best Selection of Remarks by Konosuke Matsushita, PHP Research Institute, 1996.

Therefore, no matter how much profit may be posted by our companies, I wouldn't like to live luxuriously. No, I try not to hope for such a life. For this purpose, I always sleep in a moving car or on the sofa in my office, although I am not emulating an old Chinese king in the story of "gashin shotan," who struggled against difficulties for the sake of vengeance. I have a house, which I inherited from my parents. Because it is now under the possession of my company, strictly speaking it is no longer mine. Irrespective of whether it is mine or my company's, I have no wish to own a large house.

Standing requires only 1 jo (mat size), and sleeping necessitates 0.5 jo. Such a space is sufficient for a man residing alone. Even so, I am a person actually living, and I sometimes feel concentration of stress. On that occasion, I make a point of dissipating the stress by eating superbly tasty food at a super-high-class restaurant or Japanese-style eating place (ryotei), although it occurs only several times a year.

I have been continually living in this way since I was 20 years old. This was because I learned the living methods of great men in history through learning, as well as through exchanges of souls. Uesugi Kenshin was one such great man. I have been striving to lead a life based on the academic principle of "Is he not a man of complete virtue, who feels no discomposure though men may take no note of him?"¹¹⁶ regarding the living methods of these great men as useful hints. People in the same generation or other people in society may not consider similarly. However, it is all right for me to live in my own way. I think I have been carrying through my own method of living since I was 20 years old – on the day I learned the sorrow of god through the "ofudesaki" of Omotokyo, and made up my mind to live for god and to lead a life serving the interest of god, if I can soothe even one billionth of that sorrow of god.

It would be a lie to say I did not feel a wish to live luxuriously, to obtain a high social position, and to leave a name in history. However, compared with the lives of Confucius, Buddha, Hakuin, Rinzaï and Teshu Yamaoka, how much value is there in high posts or honour? Rather, I would like to lead a life that is permanently valuable. Although the mind of god was unclear, I would like to lead a life for the interest of god and helpful to society and people. This was the starting point of myself when I was 20.

After accumulating knowledge, I learned that there have been many people who had aspirations similar to mine, and who led their lives while maintaining their aspirations to the last. This was true with regard to Confucius, Buddha, Hakuin and Daito Kokushi. Apart from the views of society, they always viewed the relationship between themselves and "heaven," and lived to the last moment based on their own sense of values surpassing the opinions of the times. Although there were no such people among my classmates or relatives, there were many who lived in such a fashion in history.

Therefore, I would like to strive to become closer, even slightly, to Confucius, Jesus Christ, Buddha, Prince Shotoku, Kukai, Wanisaburo Deguchi and Uesugi Kenshin. Apart from the views of the people in the same generation or those in society, I would like to live according to the same value standards held by these great men. This is my secret of living in an energetic way, cheerfully, and in a forward-looking manner at any time. At the last moment of

¹¹⁶ *The Analects of Confucius*, Chapter 1, Verse 1.

my life, I would like to shout "Ka-tsu!" -- and die. I would like to maintain the method of living strenuously and diligently until just prior to my death, until my body continues to live, and until my brain remains clear. This was the starting point of myself at age 20, and it was the agreement established between myself and god.

CHAPTER THREE:

WHAT IS SHINTO, THE FUNDAMENTAL BACKGROUND TO JAPANESE CULTURE?

Prosperity in life rather than salvation in mind

There are numerous religions in this world. To name some of them, Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism, and Confucianism are well known. The main object of the teachings of those religions is salvation of the soul. Thus, it could be said that many religions preach eternal mental salvation rather than worldly happiness. For example, Christianity preaches that believing in the Saviour, Jesus Christ, will allow Christians to enter Heaven. And, Buddhism preaches that Buddhists can reach the mental state of Nirvana, attaining a deeply transcendent state and a spiritual state of selflessness. However, the Heaven preached in Christianity and the Nirvana preached in Buddhism tells of a peaceful state of mind at the end, and do not regard the material world.

However, among the numerous religions, there is one religion that stands out - Shinto in Japan. The difference between Japanese Shinto and other religions is that Shinto places its emphasis on the prosperity of actual life, and this is its biggest feature. This aspect is displayed by Mr. Konosuke Matsushita, the founder of Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., Ltd., in what he says and does. He is a believer in Shinto and a man of deeds.

Mr. Konosuke Matsushita, the "God of Corporate Management," who is so famous that every Japanese person knows him, founded Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., after starting out from a poor family. He is famous for building the company into a worldwide household appliance maker. Separate from this company, he also founded a research institute called PHP. PHP is the abbreviation of "Peace, Happiness and Prosperity," in other words, the name means "peace, happiness and prosperity." Mr. Matsushita did not create this name based only on a casual idea. This name was drawn in accordance with Mr. Matsushita's philosophy, which is that real peace and happiness will only be brought about for the first time through prosperity. In other words, his philosophy is that it is prosperity that brings about the peace and happiness of human beings, and this is what constitutes the foundation of Shinto beliefs.

However, even Shinto does not make light of salvation of the mind and peace of the soul. It is a belief of Shinto that salvation of the mind and peace of the soul can be brought about, for the first time, once an affluent life is realized. The phrase expresses such an idea in a straightforward way in Shinto ritual prayer, "Daily business is not slack and the family is high, rich and prosperous. As if a tasty mulberry tree, the family continues to be prosperous¹¹⁷." In other words, in Shinto, not to make light of daily business, but to make the family affluent and prosperous, and to grow as thick as the leaves of mulberry trees grow, is seen to be respectful, and part of God's blessing.

¹¹⁷ Edited by Nagata Bunsho-do, *Collection of Shinto Oharai Prayers*, Nagata Bunsho-do, 1937. Edited by JINJA-HONCHO (The Association of Shinto Shrines), *Exemplary Sentences of JINJA-HONCHO: Ritual Prayers, Purification, and Festive Prayers*, Jinja Shimpo, 1956.

Judaism has an aspect similar to this aspect of Shinto. Reading Genesis in the Old Testament, you will find a famous scene in which Abraham offers his son, Isaac, to God as a sacrifice.

Once, God said to Abraham, "Go get Isaac, your only son, the one you dearly love! Take him to the land of Moriah, and I will show you a mountain where you must sacrifice him to me on the fires of altar¹¹⁸." God told him to make his beloved son and precious inheritor, who had finally reached maturity, a sacrifice. How did Abraham feel when listening to this order? I could easily imagine that he must have been greatly troubled, at a loss, and suffering. However, he chose to live in accordance with his belief in God, rather than his love for his son, and went to the designated place solemnly. Then, at the moment when he was about to kill his son, Isaac, by brandishing a knife, an angel came down to him and said to him, "Abraham! Don't hurt the boy or harm him in any way! Now I know that you truly obey God, because you were willing to offer him your only son¹¹⁹." Then, the angel continued, "you were willing to offer the LORD your only son, and so he makes you this solemn promise, "I will bless you and give you such a large family, that someday your descendants will be more numerous than stars in the sky or the grains of sand along the beach. They will defeat their enemies and take over the cities where their enemies live. You have obeyed me, and so you and your descendants will be a blessing to all nations on earth¹²⁰."

The Lord said, "I swear by pointing at myself. As you have done this, and you would even try to give your son, your only son, I will bless you greatly, may your children and grandchildren increase like the stars in Heaven and sand on the seashore. Your descendants will win the enemy's gate and all of the people on the land will receive blessings from your descendants. Because you obeyed my words."

The reason why Shinto mixed with Confucianism

It is the same as God's blessing in Judaism. In other words, God's blessing in Judaism is not to console the soul but to let the family prosper through generations of children, grandchildren, and all the generations to come. Thus, in this respect, it is similar to Shinto, which believes that peace and happiness will be realized through prosperity in real life.

Besides Judaism, Shinto is also similar to Confucianism. As everybody knows, Confucianism, which was founded by Confucius, is a religion that makes much of real life. The main point in Confucianism is how to make the life of oneself, and society, wonderful, by polishing virtues such as humanity, justice, courtesy, intelligence, and sincerity. Thus, in terms of salvation of the mind, the spiritual world, and the world of God, Confucianism hardly touches these things, pronouncing that we are, "Not to talk about a fierce God." Given such a stance, it is doubtful that we could label Confucianism a religion in the strict sense, however, at any rate, there is no question that Confucianism is a religion that preaches a way to make real life wonderful.

¹¹⁸ Gen 22.2.

¹¹⁹ Gen 22.11-12.

¹²⁰ Gen 22.15-18.

For example, there is a story in Chapter 11 of *The Analects of Confucius*¹²¹. Once upon a time, Chi Lu, a disciple, asked Confucius, "What will happen to human beings after we die?" To this question, Confucius answered, "While you do not know life, how can you know about death?" In other words, his teaching was that, as we have not yet understood the ways of living people, how could we know of the world after death. Before trying to know death, we should first know what life is.

As this episode tells, Confucius continued to preach a thorough way for people to be in the real world. Thus, it is natural that those teachings of Confucius are linked to the spirit of Shinto, which makes much of the prosperity of real life. And that is why, when Confucianism was prospering in Japan in the Edo period, so-called Confucian Shinto¹²² arose through practitioners such as Koretari Yoshikawa¹²³ and Ansai Yamazaki¹²⁴.

In this way, Shinto makes much of real life. However, on the other hand, it cannot be denied that Shinto is significantly lacking in teachings regarding how to face mental conflicts and difficulties, or how to educate and enlighten the general public, especially in comparison with other religions. The scriptures of Shinto might be the "Kojiki"¹²⁵ or the "Nihonshoki"¹²⁶. However, both the "Kojiki" and the "Nihonshoki" only describe the origin of the nation and its history, in the form of myths just like the Old Testament, so there are no guidelines that serve as a doctrine. In fact, there are hardly any teachings and rules regarding how to prepare your mind, such as, "You should do XX, and do not do XX," as can be seen in Moses' Ten Commandments¹²⁷, Jesus' Sermon on the Mount¹²⁸, or the sermons given by the Buddha or Confucius. In this way, it could be said that Shinto is a religion with an extremely low level of dogmatism. However, less dogmatism also means that it is not going to be so useful in enlightening or developing the general public. By the way, not only foreign people, but even Japanese people say, "Shinto is a religion that is hard to understand," and the biggest reason for such difficulties is said to lie in such a low level of dogma.

Japanese feeling makes a mixture of Buddhism and Shinto possible

So as to supplement what is lacking in Shinto, one of religions that connected Shinto with other religions was Confucian Shinto, as mentioned above. However, there is another religion that is much larger in scale, which has had significant impact on Japanese society and culture, and has even had the decisive influence, and that is, needless to say, Buddhism, and its mixture with Shinto. It was in the middle of 5th century that Buddhism was introduced into Japan.

¹²¹ *The Analects of Confucius*, Chapter 11, Verse 12.

¹²² Ogasawara, Haruo, *Genealogy of Shinto Worship*, Pelican-sha, 1980.

¹²³ A Shintoist (1616~1694) in the early years of the Edo Period (1600~1868). The founder of the Yoshikawa-style Shinto.

¹²⁴ A Confucian in the initial part of the Edo Period (1600~1868). He studied Buddhism and Shinto from his childhood, and subsequently learned Shinto from Koretari Kikkawa. He later systematized Shinto.

¹²⁵ Ono, Yasumaro, *Kojiki (The Record of Ancient Matters)*, Kodansha (Gakujutsu Bunko), 1977.

¹²⁶ *Nihon Shoki (The Chronicles of Japan)*, Kodansha (Gakujutsu Bunko), 1988.

¹²⁷ Exod 20.1-17.

¹²⁸ Matt 5.1-7.29.

Then, it was Shotoku Taishi who mixed only the good parts of Confucianism and Buddhism (which are the religions of foreign origin), with the Shinto that had previously been established in Japan as the native folk religion, and used it for the enlightenment of the general public and reconstruction of the nation. In particular, Taishi made much of Buddhism, and endeavoured to enlighten the general public through active utilization of Buddhism, in particular, building Kokubunji nationwide. Taishi's efforts proved to be effective, as, during the period since then and prior to the Meiji Restoration, the Japanese have accepted a mixture of Buddhism and Shinto as a matter of course, and for over 1000 years. It could be argued that the reason why, in Japan, up until today, Shinto has survived as Shinto, and Buddhism has survived as Buddhism, lies in the mixture of Buddhism and Shinto.

For example, as a representative of Japanese culture, we can point to Zen. The idea of Zen was originally born in India and flourished in China. However, in the process of its introduction by Dharma (who is famous for introducing Zen to China from India), and under the 5th Reverend, Konin, Zen was truly and precisely an Indian and an intellectual Zen. Then, entering the age of the 6th Reverend, Enou, we had the so-called living Zen, in which people would be spiritually awakened by the accumulation of training, such as splitting wood, pounding rice, and cleaning lavatories, and this turned out to be the mainstay. That was the origin of Chinese Zen.

It was in the Kamakura Period that such Zen was flourishing in Japan. It is said that Zen started to spread nationwide, beginning with a boom among soldiers who spent their days with a sense of life and death, and as one of the methods by which one could take a philosophical view of death and reach a state of mental serenity, just like a polished mirror. After that, Zen has showed no signs that its impetus will be decelerated, even into the current period of Heisei. On the contrary, in Japan, where three Zen schools, namely, Rinzai-shu, Soto-shu, and Obaku-shu, exist, Zen is at its most flourishing in the entire world. To put it more clearly, the spirit of Zen has been successful as if were underground water, not only used in the tea ceremony and the art of flower arrangement, but also involved in every aspect of Japanese daily life. Thus, it might be correct to say that Zen, which was born in India, has become part of the constitution of the Japanese people ¹²⁹.

However, when it comes to India and China, where Zen originated, the actual situation is that Zen has almost ceased to exist. This has not been limited to Zen. The teachings of Amitabha, which were spread by Honen and Shinran, have also been declining in their place of origin, but have nevertheless been firmly established in Japan. So, why have Zen and the teachings of Amitabha prospered in Japan to this extent? In short, those beliefs fit in with the Japanese sense or feeling. It might be said that they match the constitution of the Japanese.

So what then is that constitution of the Japanese? It is Shinto itself as the sense of the soul that flows in the blood of the Japanese. As both Zen and the beliefs of Amitabha contain aspects that are common to the essence of Shinto, they match with the constitution of the Japanese. Traditionally, the Japanese have had a strong desire to recognize a feeling of wonder, to unite with the greatest gods and the Buddha, and to be protected by the gods and the Buddha. Both Zen and the beliefs of Amitabha greatly match with such Japanese feeling.

¹²⁹ Haga, Koshiro, *Guide to Zen*, Tachibana Kyoyo Bunko, 1995. Suzuki, Daisetsu, *What Is Zen?* Kadokawa Sophia Bunko, 1954.

Foreign culture is filtered based on the feelings of the Japanese

In this way, because Shinto has no clear dogma, this characteristic allows it to mix easily with different varieties of its counterparts, such as foreign religions, thoughts, or culture. However, this does not mean that Shinto is willing to mix with whatever counterparts there are. It easily excludes the things that do not match with the feelings of the Japanese. For example, although Confucian teachings were accepted with respect, the thoughts on revolution contained in Confucianism were eliminated, and this shows a typical feature of Shinto.

The thoughts on revolution in Confucianism appear in the work, *Book of Mencius (Meng-zi)*¹³⁰. The school of thought which started with Confucius was passed to Zeng-zi, and passed from Zeng-zi to Zisi, the grandson of Confucius, and it was Mencius who was taught by the disciple of Zisi. And, what Mencius left as a record was *Book of Mencius*. As one of the four Chinese classics of Confucianism (*the Four Books*), which include *The Analects of Confucius*, *The Great Learning*¹³¹ written by Zeng-zi, and *The Doctrine of the Mean*¹³² written by Zisi, *Book of Mencius* is revered as a noble book in Confucianism. In fact, it is a wonderful book, containing numerous wise remarks, such as "There has never been a man totally true to himself who fails to move others¹³³," or "The sole concern of learning is to go after this strayed heart. That is all¹³⁴."

However, *Book of Mencius* also accepts revolution

Once, King Xuan of Qi asked Mencius, "The Confucianism that you believe in praises Tang-wang and Wu-wang, who rose up in a coup against their foolish masters, killed them, and deprived them of the political power accorded to more enlightened rulers. Although Confucianism preaches humanity, justice, courtesy, intelligence and truth, why does it appreciate so much Tang-wang, who crushed Jie-wang, and Wu-wang, who crushed Zhou-wang?"

Then, Mencius answered, not looking at all cowed. "Well, those who lived in ancient Confucianism never killed their monarch. By the way, we call a person who is against humanity and justice a man of humble birth, and what I heard was that a man of humble birth, Zhou-wang, was crushed, but I have never heard that a monarch was killed."

He answered that in the case of Zhou-wang, who handled his people as if they were animals, and where he was not a monarch, but a brute, it was fine to kill him. However, to be honest, such a reply by Mencius was a sophism, and does not match with the sensitivity of the Japanese. In Japan, it has long been said, "The ship that brings *Mencius* to Japan will go

¹³⁰ *Mencius*, Iwanami Bunko, 1968. *Mencius*, translated with an introduction by D.C.Lau, Penguin Books, 1970.

¹³¹ *Daigaku (The Great Learning)*, Kodansha (Gakujutsu Bunko), 1983.

¹³² *Chuyo (The Doctrine of the Mean)*, Kodansha (Gakujutsu Bunko), 1983.

¹³³ IV Part A 12 in *Mencius* translated with an introduction by D.C.Lau, Penguin Books, 1970.

¹³⁴ VI Part A 11, *Mencius*. (Mencius said, 'Benevolence is the heart of man, and rightness his road. Sad it is indeed when a man gives up the right road instead of following it and allows his heart to stray without enough sense to go after it. When his chickens and dogs stray, he has sense enough to go after them, but not when his heart strays. The sole concern of learning is to go after this strayed heart. That is all.)

down into the sea." But only this aspect of *Mencius* has been the subject of extreme dislike in Japan.

A typical case was Shoin Yoshida¹³⁵ who was in Shoka-son Juku¹³⁶. In *Komo Sakki*¹³⁷ (the review of Confucius and Mencius written by Shoin), he squarely showed his objections to this theory. What Shoin writes is, "It might be true in China, however, in our country of the Sun, that is wrong. If a subject's master is despotic and brutal, the subject should admonish that master. After continuing to admonish, admonish and admonish, even if the subject is about to have his throat cut, he should let his throat be cut and die. That is the way in Japan. If you are cut, the next person can admonish the master. Then, if that person is cut again, that is fine. That is the essence of the way of loyalty."

Although there is a saying, "If you want to be loyal, you can never be dutiful. If you want to be dutiful, you can never be loyal," if one is being forced to choose between loyalty or duty, Shotokutaishi said to choose to be dutiful. On the other hand, Koretari Yoshikawa, who founded Yoshikawa Shinto, said that we should choose to be loyal. In this case, Koretari Yoshikawa is more Japanese. In Japanese Shinto, we choose to be loyal. Even a person like Koretari Yoshikawa, who studied Confucianism so hard, selected a view that matched the feeling of the Japanese, when it came to Confucian Shinto (the Science of Shinto).

It is frequently said that the Japanese are good at imitation and mimicking. However, that is not the truth. The Japanese adopt things where they find divinity, but eliminate that where they cannot find divinity or which does not match with their feeling.

Altering foreign religions in Shinto

In this way, the Japanese have selectively accepted the foreign cultures and religions that matched up with the Japanese mental foundation based on Shinto. However, even with such acceptance, the Japanese do not wholeheartedly accept other cultures or religions without any criticism. Whenever a foreign culture, religion or thought has entered Japan it has been Japanized, in other words, it has been "Shintoized" by operation of a catalyst called Shinto. In this way, what has become Shinto has been established on Japanese soil. Now, using Buddhism as an example, let me explain this logic.

As I explained briefly in the Introduction, Buddhism as propounded by the Buddha can be summarized into three rules. These are that, everything is transient, everything is selfless, and loneliness is Nirvana. Buddhism teaches that everything is transient in this world, everything keeps on changing, living things lose their lives in the end, what has shape loses its shape in the end, and what exists in this world has no substance, therefore, we should not stick to such an empty world, but we should go out into the loneliness of Nirvana, which is

¹³⁵ A thinker (1830-1859) during the final years of the Edo Period. He always considered overseas situations, and advocated opening of the country. Also, he opened Shoka-son Juku, a private school engaged in educating young people, and harbingered the occurrence of the Meiji Restoration. Because his radical thoughts and actions angered the Tokugawa Shogunate, however, he was arrested and was killed in jail.

¹³⁶ A private school managed by Yoshida Shoin in the present city of Hagi, Yamaguchi Prefecture, after 1856. This private school fostered a number of excellent people who contributed to the attainments of the Meiji Restoration.

¹³⁷ Yoshida, Shoin, *Komo Satsuki*, Kodansha (Gakujutsu Bunko), 1980.

eternally unchanging, and should make much of such a state of mind. In other words, Buddhism is, basically, a denial of reality. As the Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, himself did, what Buddhism ought to be originally is to do away with the family, assets, and everything, and to reach a world of spiritual awakening (*Satori*). Thus, Buddhism is essentially a belief in renouncing the world. However, once it came into Japan, it was drastically changed.

In the Nara Period, which was not such a long time after the introduction of Buddhism into Japan, a law concerning priests and nuns called the "Ordinance for Priests and Nuns" was issued. The objective of this law was that, "There will be no blameworthiness as long as priests and nuns stay in the temples and propagate. However, priests and nuns should not leave the temples and walk around the fields and mountains in order to be spiritually awakened." In a nutshell, priests and nuns should not walk around the fields and mountains or meditate in the mountains. If they had time, they should also open temples so as to save the general public. It was, in other words, a prohibition on renunciation of the world, and this was the same as denying one of the fundamental tenets of Buddhism.

Why did the government accept Buddhism but prohibit the renunciation of the world that is the foundation of Buddhist thought? In short, Shinto takes the view that what is not useful in life is not divine. That is why, such a basic tenet of Buddhism, the renunciation of the world, was denied in Japan in the early stages, and then, it was set down that it was fine to build a temple and save the general public, but priests and nuns should not walk around the fields and mountains to meditate. It was quite interesting, and quite Japanese, that the "Ordinance for Priests and Nuns" was readily accepted by priests. Some of the priests, such as Gyoki¹³⁸, who became a noted priest in later years, continued preaching and travelling around Japan against the order, and such priests were opposed by the government. However, in general, it is said that almost no problems arose.

In this way, Buddhism that was born in India was established as Japanese-style Buddhism. However, if Buddhism had never been Japanized and had remained stuck as Indian-style Buddhism, it would never have been established in Japan, and it would never have had a significant impact on Japanese culture. Today, in the Japanese Buddhist circle, it is a fact that there are not just a few Buddhist schools that have succeeded under an hereditary system. However, there is no description of a hereditary system in Buddhist scriptures. If the Buddha knew this fact, he must be quite surprised. As the Imperial Family demonstrates, the hereditary system is clearly an idea from Shinto. In other words, the hereditary system is the thought itself, "The fact that a life is succeeded by generation after generation is divine." Then, in this manner, Buddhism had also become Shintoistic, and has undergone unique developments as Japanese Buddhism.

Is Shinto animism?

Now, I would like to think about the issue of whether, in the end, Shinto is shamanism or animism. To put the conclusion up front, although Shinto is animistic, strictly speaking, it is not animism.

¹³⁸ Inoue, Kaoru (edited by the Japan Historical Study Society), *Gyoki*, Yoshikawa Kobunkan (Jinbutsu Soshō), 1959.

Animism is the belief that spirits reside in all things in the universe and one must respect such souls. It is animism to believe that the spirits of the mountains reside in the mountains, the spirits of the sea reside in the sea, and the spirits of the woods reside in the woods. Given this interpretation, Shinto, which worships the mountains, the sea, the lakes, and conducts memorial services for needles or rats used in experiments, appears to be animism.

However, upon viewing the details, you will notice that Shinto is never animism. The reason is that, even though Shinto worships the mountains, the seas, and the lakes, it does not set up all of the mountains, seas, or lakes as the sacred places where "the gods sit." On the contrary, Shinto sets up only limited mountains as the mountains of the gods or sacred mountains, such as Mount Fuji¹³⁹, Mount Miwa and Mount Bandai¹⁴⁰. Shinto prohibits persons from entering such mountains as they are confined zones, and makes much of not cutting down the trees.

However, when it comes to other "regular" mountains, Shinto sanctions the clearing of the mountains to change them into farms, and the cutting down of trees. This is also true of lakes and rivers. Shinto treats solemnly a lake or a river that has been set down as a sacred lake where "the gods sit," however, raw sewage is discharged into the lakes or rivers that are not sacred ones, or they are changed into fish farms. In other words, they are used for people's lives.

In short, the Japanese people distinguish a specific mountain from regular mountains, distinguish a specific area from regular areas, and worship specific mountains and specific areas. The ability to make such a distinction is a spiritual intuition, or, putting it into English terms, a shamanistic understanding. With the guidance of persons with shamanistic abilities (such persons have appeared age by age, such as Shosen Shonin, who opened Hakone¹⁴¹, or Taicho Shonin, who opened Hakusan¹⁴²), mountains of God and spiritual mountains were set down. Faith in such mountains, seas, and rivers was conveyed from generation to generation, as part of the old traditions. And, mountains and rivers that are located outside sacred areas are used for life. That is the difference from animism, as it is practiced by the Indians and the aboriginal peoples in Hawaii. Although it is similar, Shinto is not animism.

Today, where destruction of the natural environment and global warming have become serious issues, calls to review animism, which states that spirits reside in all things in the universe, have been heightened among ecologists. They say that we should do away with civilization and should go back to primitive times^{143 144}. Certainly, from the perspective of an

¹³⁹ A dormant volcano located between Shizuoka Prefecture and Yamanashi Prefecture. Its height is 3,777 m above sea level. It is the No. 1 celebrated mountain in Japan. The spiritual symbol mountain of Japan.

¹⁴⁰ An active volcano towering in the northern area of Fukushima Prefecture, with a height of 1,819 m above sea level. It is regarded as the spiritual symbol mountain representing the Tohoku District.

¹⁴¹ Mt. Hakone and its vicinity, located in the western part of Kanagawa Prefecture. Hakone Shrine, built on the coast of Lake Ashinoko, is known for its miraculous effects responsive to prayers.

¹⁴² A volcano located between Ishikawa Prefecture and Gifu Prefecture. Regarded as one of three spiritual mountains, together with Mt. Fuji and Mt. Tateyama. On the foot and top of the mountain, the Hakusan Shrine is located.

¹⁴³ Naess, Arne & Rothenberg, David, (translated by Saito, Naosuke & Kai, Tatsumi), *What Is Deep Ecology? (Ecology, Community, and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy)*, Bunka Shobo Hakubunsha, 1997.

animism that teaches that human beings are part of nature, it would be possible for human beings to mix with nature, and we could aim at the protection of nature. However, if we deny all of modern civilization as those deep ecologists assert, what would happen to the happiness of people and the civilization and culture of human beings? Could we say that life like that in the Jomon Period was truly a happy life? As a matter of course, we should make much of nature, however, it may be necessary to have the generosity to accept civilization as it is.

In relation to this point, and even though it is the same ecology, from the perspective of shallow ecology, we could see a possibility for the coexistence of civilization and nature. In fact, it is Shinto that is most close to shallow ecology, and I consider that Shinto is more similar to shallow ecology than animism.

Shinto also teaches that everything was created by the gods. It preaches that mountains, seas, lakes, nameless flowers, plants, and stones by the roadside were all created by the gods. And, in Shinto, which is polytheism, each thing has the name of a god, such as Amaterasuomikami for the goddess of the sun, Tsukuyomiokami for the god of the moon, and Susanookami for the god of the earth. In addition, Shinto sets down there are gods, even in excrement, such as Haniyasu-hime, and Haniyasu-hiko. Given such features, it could be said that Shinto is typical pantheism. In fact, a number of Japanese recognize that Shinto is pantheism. However, from my point of view, even though it is similar, Shinto is not pantheism because, in Shinto, all things are not named as if they were God. As I mentioned above, Shinto only worships or conducts a memorial service for a specific mountain, a specific lake, or a thing that has special miraculous efficacy, and there is no one who worships stones by the roadsides, or flowers and plants in the corner of the garden, as merciful gods. A memorial service for needles, or a memorial service for pets, is conducted to show gratitude to needles that have been used for many years, or for pets that have become just like family members, and in order to pray for them respectively. However, it does not mean that we worship needles and pets if they were gods.

Certainly, at a glance, Shinto resembles both pantheism and animism. However, despite the fact that Shinto has similar features, it is neither pantheistic nor animistic. The difference is that Shinto distinguishes sacredness from commonness, and distinguishes right from wrong. In other words, by this distinction, Shinto distinguishes between right and wrong, and uses this as the basis to accept modern civilization. The reason why Japan was able to achieve modernization in only several decades following the Meiji Restoration¹⁴⁵ (after Japan came across advanced Western culture for the first time) was thanks to its foundations in Shinto. If Shinto were pure animism or pantheism, it would have been impossible for the Japanese people to actively accept the material civilization of the West, and the modernization of Japan would have been delayed.

¹⁴⁴ Capra, Fritjof, et al., *Consideration of Deep Ecology – Toward the Sustainable Future*, Kosei Shuppansha, 1995.

¹⁴⁵ The political reform process that occurred between November 1867 and January 1868, when Japan developed from the feudal society to a modern nation. The regime shifted at only the sacrifice of a small human loss, and so it is known as a bloodless revolution, like the Glorious Revolution of Britain.

God *Kami* is a "hidden figure *Kakuremi*"

In this way, while they have traditionally distinguished sacredness from commonness, and right from wrong, the Japanese people have worshiped the sacred mountains, the sacred seas, and the sacred woods. However, such devotion does not mean that the Japanese people have made the mountains themselves into gods or the targets of worship. Although there are sacred mountains, sacred seas, and sacred woods, the Japanese people have not made the mountains themselves into gods. Because the gods have come down onto sacred mountains such as Mount Fuji, Hakusan, and Mount Bandai, the Japanese people have worshiped and made much of Mount Fuji, Hakusan and Mount Bandai. Therefore, if we ask if Shinto is nature worship, the answer is that it is not worship of nature. Although Shinto respects nature, it worships only the gods who come down onto the mountains and the gods who reside in the lakes.

Those gods are not the God of monotheism. And, even though it is a similar polytheism, Shinto is different from the gods of ancient Greece. The difference is that, in Shinto, the gods do not appear, and this is a decisive difference from the gods of the Greek religion. The gods in Greek myths come boldly into view before people's eyes, however, the Japanese gods hardly ever appear before people's eyes. Even though they sometimes appear, the gods of Shinto usually hide themselves. That is why, in Japanese, "hidden figure (*Kakuremi*)" is read as "god (*Kami*)."¹⁴⁶ In other examples, various definitions of god are written as "fire and water" and "the upper part," but are all pronounced as "god (*Kami*)" in Japanese). Nevertheless, in Japan, it has been the traditional view that divine figures do not appear in front of people. In other words, Japanese Shinto is not idol worship, and the ancient Japanese, through worship of the mountains of the gods and the spiritual mountains, worshipped gods that did not appear.

In this respect, Shinto is somewhat similar to Judaism. However, Judaism is monotheistic, Shinto is polytheistic. While the former believes in God, the latter believe in *Kami*. So, fundamentally, there are several major differences between Judaism and Shinto. However, as I mentioned above, in terms of the ideas of both religions that place more emphasis on prosperity in real life, rather than salvation of the mind, and that divine figures do not appear, both religions are significantly alike. For example, when Moses was granted the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai, Moses only heard the voice of God from somewhere and God did not show his form. In this way, in Judaism, God is a "hidden figure," and idol worship has been strictly prohibited, and this is exactly the same as the way Shinto ought to be in Japan.

It was when the King of Paekche¹⁴⁶ presented a statue of Buddha to the Emperor, along with the introduction of Buddhism that God appeared for the first time before Japanese people, who had previously believed that divine figures would never appear. What arrived in Japan, after travelling over the sea, was a flashy statue in the form of a human being, which was completely covered in glittering gold foil. "It is a statue of the Buddha from a foreign country! It is the divine god of a foreign country!" I can imagine how people in those days would have been surprised. For the Japanese people, who had believed in the invisible gods by worshipping the mountains, the seas, and the woods, it must have been something unimaginable that God would appear in person in the form of a shining figure. In this way, it

¹⁴⁶ An ancient state in Korea. Many people came from that state to Japan.

might not be too much to say that the introduction of Buddhism was the first culture shock that the Japanese people had experienced in their history. However, after a while, this introduced statue of Buddha was also Japanized, or in other words, altered by Shinto. What happened to this statue was that it became a hidden Buddha.

The more divine Buddha is, or the more divine the statue of Buddha is, the more it will be a hidden Buddha. In other words, it will not appear to be the Buddha. To make statues into hidden Buddhas and to worship a Buddha that will not appear is what Shinto ought to be and how the Japanese people have contact with something divine. Thus, a form of belief that was the opposite of idol worship, which was to worship the gods through worshipping the mountains where the gods sat, was also used in the statues of Buddha.

However, even though the Buddhas are hidden, this does not mean that they keep on hiding themselves all the time. Once a year only, they come into view before people. People look forward to it and worship such Buddhas joyously, and they look forward to the arrival of the next exhibition of the statue of Buddha. That is why the moment when Buddha appears becomes more precious. It is also why many statues of Buddha in temples with a long and distinguished history, such as Shitenno-ji, Shingisan-Hongu, and Asakusa Kannon, are hidden statues. By the way, the Emperor also seldom appeared before people's eyes in the old days, and people usually worshipped him from a distance, facing towards the Imperial Palace.

Anyway, in Japanese Shinto, the more divine an existence is, the more that existence hides itself. Shinto does not make all things in the universe divine or into something close to the gods. Shinto has only worshiped specific mountains, specific seas and specific woods as places where the gods sit, and tries to distinguish sacredness from commonness, and right from wrong. That mentality has also been displayed in taking in foreign cultures, and the Japanese people have only taken in foreign culture when it has matched Japanese culture, or the climate and feeling of the Japanese. That also means that the Japanese people are good at absorbing the essence. In addition, Shinto's polytheism believes that it is fine for the gods to increase without end, therefore, it can absorb any and all wonderful things, regardless of their being foreign religions or cultures.

In the case of monotheism, only one option is available, the believer believes in one absolute God, or not. On the other hand, when it comes to polytheism, believers can believe in multiple gods, and there is no problem even if there are several divine figures. As a matter of course, among the gods in polytheism, there do exist ranks, and a supreme god does exist. However, it only means that the rank of that god is supreme, and not that there is only one absolute existence. The supreme goddess in Shinto is Amaterasuomikami, but she is not the absolute god. In terms of management of the earth, Susanoomikoto is in the highest position. And, in terms of the moon, Tsukiyominomikoto is in the highest position. The god who controls rivers is the god Mizuhame, the god who controls trees is the god Ketsumiko, and the god who controls the winds is the god Ibukidonushi. In this way, there exist chief executive managers for each jurisdiction. Thus, Amaterasuomikami, the supreme goddess, should also work with the other gods.

In this way, even though there exists a supreme god, there does not exist any absolute god, which is why Shinto considers things in a relative way. Shinto is not the religion that gives a clear answer with an option of "Yes or No." Therefore, it is significantly generous to other

religions. As long as it matches with the Japanese feeling, Shinto accepts such a religion, "Well, a new god has arrived." For example, both Judaism and the Jewish people were persecuted all over the world, however there is no history in Japan of persecution of Judaism or the Jewish people. And, not limiting this to Judaism, and irrespective of whether it is Christianity or Islam, it is the Japanese people who can accept the "God of Christianity" and the "God of Islam," both easily and immediately. Shinto is, originally, such a generous religion.

An example that shows, in a straightforward way, one such stance in Shinto, is the blessing of the Seven Gods of Good Fortune. Every Japanese person must be aware of the Seven Gods of Good Fortune as they are set in an ornament, or drawn in a picture, as a good-luck charm for prosperity in business, and they are loved by the general public even today. The idea of the Seven Gods of Good Fortune is that the Seven Gods of Good Fortune will travel on a treasure ship and transport seven blessings respectively. Of those Seven Gods of Good Fortune, namely, Bishamonten, Benzaiten, Daikokuten, Hoteisama, Fukurokuju, Jurojin, and Ebisusama, it is Bishamonten, Benzaiten and Daikokuten who are originally the gods from India, and Hoteisama, Fukurokuju, and Jurojin who are the gods originally from China. Thus, the only god made in Japan, or the only genuinely domestic god, is Ebisusama. Even in the case of Ebisusama, its name means "foreign," so strictly speaking, Ebisusama is a Japanese god who has the name "foreign." You may be getting confused, so, putting it a simple way, it is the Seven Gods of Good Fortune who, even though the idea itself is made in Japan, are such that foreign gods account for most of the cast. In short, this means that the Japanese people do not care about the identities of the gods. The hidden idea behind these Seven Gods of Good Fortune is that, irrespective of their being Japanese gods or foreign gods, and regardless of their being of Indian or Chinese origin, as long as they are gods of good fortune blessing people, there is no need to ask about their identity, and, as all of them are the gods of good fortune, they can be on the same ship in harmony. This may be strange to foreigners, but the Japanese people can accept such ideas without struggle.

In fact, it might be said that the Japanese have no principles, or have inaccurate or absent policies. However, if Japan were a country where instead of polytheistic worship, only one absolute god were believed, it would cause a great deal of trouble. If various gods got on the same ship together, undoubtedly a dispute would arise immediately, "I cannot get on the same ship with that god because he is the god of that country," and so on. Given the nature of other religions, the idea of the Seven Gods of Good Fortune is particularly magnanimous. The Seven Gods of Good Fortune is an idea that is suitable for the Japanese, as they do not stick closely to religious identity or the logic of religious origins.

This way of thinking stems from Shinto, therefore, Shinto could take in Buddhism without resistance, and mix with it when it was introduced, and also mix with Confucianism. Then, when capitalism was introduced into Japan, Shinto also accepted capitalism and has created Japanese-style capitalism or a Japanese management style by skilfully mixing capitalism with Japanese culture.

The spirit of Shinto and my artistic activities

So far, I have mentioned several characteristics of Shinto. Therefore, I will give a general summary of these characteristics.

- Shinto is polytheism.
- In Shinto, God's blessing is said to be the prosperity in life, rather than salvation of the mind.
- Shinto does not have any clear dogma.
- As Shinto has no dogma, it is generous to other religions and accepts whatever good things exist.

However, this does not mean that Shinto simply accepts other religions as they are, but instead Shinto mixes such religions with Japanese culture, and changes them into the things that match the feelings of the Japanese.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this paper, the reason that I have engaged in various artistic activities is also based on the spirit of Shinto mentioned above. Whenever I tell others that I am engaged in Japanese Noh plays, as well as Western operas and ballets, and even classical Chinese operas, everybody is quite surprised.

However, I do not feel any contradiction within myself. In other words, an opera has its beauty, a ballet leaves its own deep impression, and a classical Chinese opera has its own beauty and energy. A Japanese Noh play has its own original beauty and mysterious profundity. All of them have their own beautiful and impressive elements. Therefore, it is better to take up the challenge of anything, irrespective of it being from the East or the West. In this manner, I can absorb the soul of each art form and the essence of the culture that gave birth to that art, and, from such an understanding, it might be even possible for me to give birth to a new art. Given such considerations, I have engaged in all genres of art.

Incidentally, besides artistic activities, I am also engaged in corporate management and welfare activities, for the same reasons. From my point of view, both the arts and welfare are divine works. In Shinto, which is polytheism, there exists a god who accords with each role or type of work. So as there is the god of the sun for the sun, the god of the moon for the moon, the god of the earth for the earth, the god of the mountain for the mountains, the god of the sea for the sea, even in the house there is the god of the kitchen for the kitchen and the god of lavatory for the lavatory. In the same manner, I say that there exists the god of art for the arts, the god of welfare for welfare and the god of corporate management for corporate management. So, if I can extract the divine part, and the most magnificent part out of each field, as if the Seven Gods of Good Fortune were gods with different talents on the same ship, I can spend my life fruitfully. Based on such an idea, I have selected a borderless way of living as a corporate manager, a management consultant, an active person in welfare, a scholar, and an artist. Even just limiting things to the artistic field, the reason why I have challenged myself with arts from all genres, including Noh plays, classical Chinese opera, opera, ballet, calligraphy, the tea ceremony, the art of flower arrangement, Japanese drawing, and oil painting, lies in that idea.

I might be being long-winded, but Japanese culture is a polytheistic culture, and does not care about identities. Neither does it have any firm self-assertion. It is a culture that says, "As long as it is good, we can get along well on the same ship." In parallel with the idea of the Seven Gods of Good Fortune, I can accept and enjoy, not only the Japanese arts, but also

the Chinese and European arts, without any hesitation. In other words, coexistence and co-prosperity become possible. Every art has its own beauty, such as a classical Chinese opera has its own beauty, a Noh play has its own beauty, an opera, calligraphy, a painting - all have their own beauty. Therefore, in this way, I absorb only the magnificent parts of various cultures and various arts with my own sense and heart, and then, after taking them in, I express them in my own way. At the same time, I mix each art with a sense of myself. If I can realize such endeavours, how wonderful it will be. I will combine a Noh play, which expresses the "stillness" and mysterious profundity of Japan, and a ballet, which expresses Western dynamic "motion," as one of my test cases and in order to achieve my goal.

It is possible to allow such arts, which function in this manner as bearers of fortune for pleasure and happiness, to get on the same ship together, and, placing the arts, welfare, and the economy together on the same ship, I should be able to develop them simultaneously, and in a diverse way. There is no rule that prohibits an artist from engaging in welfare activities, or a businessman from engaging in welfare activities. The economy has the function of saving a nation's people, as expressed in, "Ruling the world and saving the people," thus, its function can be said to be one of the gods. And, as the arts also bring about emotion and pleasure to people, it is also one of the gods. Welfare is also a god. European gods as well as Eastern gods are on the same ship, and bring about happiness and give blessings to people. As long as they bring about such pleasant moments, I do not care about whatever function the gods have or where they have comes from, which is exactly the idea of the Seven Gods of Good Fortune. That is my philosophy.

While Shinto has many other facets, I would like to make much of its approach of not questioning the identity represented by the idea of the Seven Gods of Good Fortune, and that it would allow everyone to mix on the same ship, or any arts, in a friendly manner. All of my elements as a businessperson, an active person in welfare, an artist, a musician, a person engaging in theatre arts, a calligrapher, and a painter, are on the same ship, which is myself, and they are there in a friendly manner, because of the spirit of Shinto. I do not believe that a human being should have one special field. As long as we are happy, as long as we can improve our souls, and as long as everyone can be happy, we can accept anything. I do not care about its identity. It is not my concern if it is old or new. I do not ask about the genre, such as whether it is the economy, welfare, or art. Each of them has a divine function, thus, all of them are divine. These are my ideas, based on Shinto. Because of my philosophy, as such, I have been able to be engaged in those activities simultaneously, and I consider that I would like to deepen that approach further in the coming years.

Art and belief from the perspectives of truth, goodness and beauty

Science is also a part of God, art is also a part of God, and religion is also a part of God.

Now, let me change the topic. Of religionists, some think that it is the religionist who has the best knowledge of God and the Buddha. They seem to think that they are the professionals regarding God and the Buddha, "There is no one who is so knowledgeable about the gods and Buddhism." However, such an idea is thoughtless and arrogant. The gods and Buddha

do not appear only in the genre of religion, and it is not only religionists who are knowledgeable about the gods and Buddha.

According to the Christian theology, God (in this case, God is not the *Kami* of Shinto, but the God of Christianity, the one and only absolute Almighty God) manifests himself in this world in the form of three aspects, namely, truth, goodness, and beauty. In other words, God has the aspect of truth, the aspect of goodness, and the aspect of beauty. Then, of these, it is science that pursues the aspect of truth in God, and so, when a person pursues science, that person is said to enter the domain of God. As it is scientists who pursue science, it is likely that scientists understand and grasp God much better than the average religionist who is only reading about it in books. Of course, I do not mean that all scientists pursue truth. However, it might be true that to pursue science to its very limits would drive people into the domain of God. For example, Einstein said, "I heard the voice of the universe and listened to the music of the universe," and there are numbers of scientists who have had mysterious experiences close to the ones that Einstein experienced, and for those who do, the more pious they will be, the more their studies will proceed. Given such examples, I think that scientists who pursue truth understand God more deeply.

Beauty is, needless to say, the world of art. The arts are originally worlds of inspiration, thus, it is self-evident that the arts are close to God. Since ancient times, many musicians and painters have come across the gods, talked about the gods, and expressed the gods. They must know much more about the gods and have experienced more of the gods than those who call themselves religionists.

Goodness is classified into the genre of religion and morality. The role played by ethics, morality, and religion, is to enable judgment regarding what is good and bad, what is divine and what is not, and to drive people to goodness. In other words, even religion takes charge of only one aspect of truth, goodness and beauty.

In this way, human beings have tried to come close to the gods from three directions, namely, truth, goodness and beauty, however it is something of a prejudice or distortion to pursue only truth, only beauty, or only goodness. For example, a person who seeks religion lacks the posture of pursuing the artistic nature of beauty, scientific nature, or the rationality of truth, and that religionist is odd in some way. Further, if there is an artist who pursues beauty, but does not understand scientific rationality, or the nature of law, that artist is also prejudiced. And, if a scientist, who pursues truth, lacks in his nature religion, who knows what that scientist would do? In many cases, a lack of religious spirit has resulted in the modification of genes and the creation of atomic bombs, which could destroy human beings. Therefore, it is not true that all that a scientist should do is pursue truth. Only when a scientist has, simultaneously, the passion to pursue science, together with the spirit to understand beauty and express beauty, and the spirit to seek goodness, can that scientist have the spirit to pursue science.

When truth, goodness and beauty are understood in this manner, it could be said that science is also a part of God, art is also a part of God, and religion is also a part of God. Therefore, regardless of whether one is a scientist, an artist, or a religionist, one is never right without having the other two respective elements. Putting it another way, to seek the three aspects of truth, goodness and beauty, in a balanced way, is the shortest path to the most accurate understanding of God. Even religion, which appears to be closest to the gods

and the Buddha, is only a part of God, so it should also be based on the elements of science and art. The arts also require elements of religion and science. And, when it comes to science, the scientist who incorporates both elements of religion and art is the closest to God.

When considering what a religionist ought to be, based on the direction of truth, goodness and beauty, I can not help but say that a religionist who lacks the artistic element, is low down in the levels. In addition, a religionist who lacks the scientific element, and who cannot think through matters rationally, is a dubious religionist, who, from my point of view, is the incarnation of dogma. Even for a religionist, as long as he or she is a religionist, the spirit to pursue truth and beauty is indispensable. Lacking those two elements, a person becomes a truly dubious character, even history clearly tells us this.

I recognized this in my youth when I awoke to the understanding that religion entails such a risk, and, so as to avoid such risk, it is necessary to learn the spirit of rationality. So the method that I chose was to be involved in corporate management. I tried to learn scientific rationality by being involved in corporate management. Some may ask, "How can corporate management be scientific?" However, such a question proves that they do not know what corporate management ought to be. Corporate management is the pursuit of rationality itself. Even though it has some human aspects, such as personnel management, if numbers are not managed steadily, a company will easily go bankrupt. On top of that, unless we have common sense in this society no one will treat you as an official trading partner in business. In this way, corporate management also contains truth, goodness and beauty. Thus, to be honest, the reason why I, who have such a shamanistic personality, can have survived up until today, without losing a sense of balance, might be owing to the fact that I have been engaged in corporate management since my mid 20s.

The universal religious nature and the universal divinity

Nevertheless, it is too presumptuous for religionists to believe that they are the ones who understand the most about the gods and the Buddha. However, even though a religionist has devoted himself or herself to studies concerning the gods and the Buddha, a religionist should become humble, and always look back, to see if he or she has learned a refined artistic nature, or if he or she has not strayed from scientific nature, rationality, or social common sense. Such a religionist could be said to be a real religionist. If a religionist cannot do that, it would be beneficial for him or her to quit being a religionist.

However, while he or she still tries to live as a religionist, that person should make much of the universal religious nature. A person who lives as a religionist usually belongs to a certain religious society, or is the founder of a religion by himself or herself. And, that person is frequently respected and worshiped by other adherents within the religious group who are concerned with divine existence. However, is it not a rare case that such a personality is only respected and worshipped within the religious group concerned, and, once he or she goes out of the group, he or she is frowned on by the general public, "Who is this guy? Is it the founder of such and such a religious group? Why on earth is he worthy of respect?" The reason that such cases arise is that the religionist has not learned about the universal religious nature. Then, what is the universal religious nature? It becomes complicated when trying to explain it in words, but in short, the universal religious nature arises if a religionist is admired, not only within his or her own religious group, but also by those who do not belong

to the group, and those who do not believe in any religion or the gods or Buddha, because, "He or she is such excellent person, and that is what one would expect of a real religionist." I believe, that by setting such admiration as one's standard, it is clear at a glance whether a religionist has readily understood the universal religious nature or not.

For example, the Buddha is the founder of the Buddhism, but he has earned the respect of many people other than Buddhists, and this is so even today. As the teachings of the Buddha and his acts had universality, they have had impact on many people beyond the ages. While Jesus is, of course, the divine Savoir and the great Messiah for Christians, those who are not Christian also do not look down on him. In general, even people who are not Christian and may not go so far as to respect him, do but find a certain value in him and appreciate him. This is also true of Confucius. People who do not believe in Confucianism still discover value and use Confucianism to assist in their own way of living. Laozi and Mohammed are the same. The reason why today they continue to influence people all over the world, in the same way and after several thousands of years since their deaths, is that the words they spoke and their ways of living contained universal messages, beyond the ages and beyond the races.

That is what a real religionist ought to be. I consider that a real religionist should demonstrate a way of thinking and a power of execution that are appreciated, not only by people who know him or her, or who know his or her religious activities, but also by followers of other religions and people who do not believe in religion at all. Such people would note, "He or she is such a splendid personality!" In particular, if a religionist has not left behind anything that represents his or her own philosophy or beliefs, as his or her achievement, I think that such a religionist is not a real one. What is a real religionist? A real religionist should have the universal religious nature and a universal divinity. Therefore, a religionist who lacks such universality could be a sham or a quack. On the basis of such thinking, I intend to train myself in order to be as close to past saints as possible.

In fact, the reason why, in December 1996, I established a free emergency hospital in Cambodia (Sihanouk Hospital), which is open 24 hours a day, was based on such thoughts. I am not all that willing to talk about my own welfare activities, however, the motivation to want to help people in difficulties, and to help people suffering from disease, is the universal divinity that is common to all people. It is this divinity that affects people's minds, beyond the religious groups, the dogmas, and the races, and that should be utilised by a religionist. About five years ago, when I visited Cambodia and faced an extremely tragic sight, such a thought caught me strongly, and I immediately thought of founding a free emergency hospital that would be open 24 hours. And, at the same time, I had the idea that, by taking the opportunity to found a hospital, it might be possible to develop a new kind of religious cooperation. So, I let World Mate, which I supervise, share the responsibility for the foundation of the hospital, and I made proposals to different parties, who might later advance the management of the hospital through cooperation with other religious groups. Luckily, I received the willing consent of a Christian group, and we were in haste to build the hospital. However, once we were finally starting to prepare for the opening ceremony, I began gradually to have the idea that it was not enough for only Shinto and Christianity to join forces, and that, as Cambodia is one of the greatest Buddhist nations in the world, participation from the Buddhist community would be indispensable.

Thus, I presented my idea to the local Buddhist association, and this association willingly gave me their consent. The opening ceremony was then held in three styles, namely, the Christian style, the Buddhist style and the Shinto style, which was favourably received.

When it comes to religious cooperation, WCRP (World Conference for Religion and Peace) and the IARF (International Association for Religious Freedom) have been widely known. However, from my point of view, they only hold conferences. Even though they say, "The age of dialogue is over, and what is left to us is execution," they have still continued to hold conference after conference. There are all sorts of religious cooperation. In particular, in a large-scale organization, there are barriers and therefore they might have difficulty in executing such cooperative endeavours. Also, dogmas within religions can interfere, so they cannot join forces with other religions. If that is true, it is meaningless to observe the goings on of such groups as WCRP and IARF. That is why I founded the emergency hospital in Cambodia, and have managed it jointly with the local Christian group and the local Buddhist association. And at present, I am also going ahead with a plan to found a second emergency hospital in Albania. Needless to say, this project has also proceeded with the cooperation of a Christian group.

In short, what is important is having the universal religious nature and the universal divinity. To offer free treatment to people who are too poor to see doctors is an act in accordance with the universal divinity, which bears no relation to whether it is Buddhist, Christian or Shinto. Therefore, even religionists, who are usually hard to bring together as once force, can cooperate with each other from that point of view. I call such a movement, where religionists join forces based on such thoughts, the "religious universalism movement." If I appeal for religious cooperation in developing countries centered on the building of a hospital, the religious universalism movement could make great progress. Even though my ability is limited, I can still do something in such an environment of religious cooperation. And, at the end of such cooperation, there may exist the universal religious nature. These are my thoughts concerning religious cooperation. I believe that, if I can continue to realize religious cooperation through my future welfare activities it will be rather wonderful.

Global religion and ethnic religion

By the way, I frequently visit Australia, the United States and China on business, but when I say that I am a person who believes in Shinto, people often say something like, "Shinto? What is that? It is the ethnic religion in Japan? Anyway, it is not a global religion." Certainly, Shinto is the Japanese ethnic religion, and has not spread to territories all over the world like Christianity, Buddhism or Islam have, so it is quite natural that people should ask such a question. However, I cannot help feeling that they have a weird look in their eyes, or, frankly speaking, I cannot help feeling that they have a certain sense of contempt. Of course, it may just be my imagination. However, in truth, it is not my imagination. It is certain that in each word they utter, in saying, "Our Christianity is the global religion," there hides the thought that they look down on an obscure religion from a far-east nation. Anyway, it is not such a big deal if Shinto is looked down on or not. However, what I cannot help wondering is why Christians and Buddhists believe that their religions are global religions, without questioning it.

True, the number of Christians has increased worldwide today. The number of Muslims is also huge. Buddhism has done its best in its own way. As Confucianism has spread only in

China, Korea, Taiwan and Japan, some may not consider it a global religion. But as it has had an influence on many people, it could be called a global religion. But did Jesus, Mohammed, the Buddha, or Confucius, who founded those religions, think about them spreading all over the world from the very beginning? To put the conclusion up front, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and even Confucianism, have become global religions. But they were ethnic religions first, and they were never intended to be global religions from their inception.

For example, Jesus Christ only preached his teachings among the Jewish people, and did not issue messages to the entire world. It was Jesus who asked the Jewish people of the day, who were hedged in by rules, about the real meaning of the Ten Commandments that Moses had been granted by God. He asked if the original purpose of those rules was happiness of the people, whether the rules did not exist simply for the sake of rules, if love was the most important thing. In other words, to take a day off on the Sabbath does not mean that people take a day off because they should, but it was because taking a day off would make people happy, that the day of the Sabbath was set down. Therefore, it is wrong to take a day-off simply in order to observe the rules. In this way, it was the revolutionary part of Jesus as a religionist that appealed to love, even within the terms of the rules. However, Jesus preached love only to the Jewish people. He intended only to preach about the original purpose of the teachings of God, which they believed in.

Then, how about the Buddha? He preached the way of Buddhism in order to save the Indian people who were then suffering under the caste system, and did not preach with all the people of the world as his target. The reason why he preached his various teachings, including the three rules (that everything is transient, everything is selfless, and loneliness is Nirvana), was to persuade people that, once they went to the next world, there was no need to be born again and no need to suffer any more under the caste system. Thus, the preaching done by the Buddha was only targeted towards the Indian people of those days. However, as his teachings and acts included universal messages, Buddhism has spread worldwide throughout the ages.

Confucius did not claim anything like "salvation of all human beings," either. He only preached to the Chinese people. In those days, Chinese society was strongly influenced by a belief in Shinsen (a legendary hermit with miraculous powers), and many people were captivated by profound mystery. So as to correct such a trend, Confucius preached that to trace the path of other human beings, or the path to sainthood through learning, was what a human being ought to do. And then, as the teachings and the way of life of Confucius were too one-sided with respect to reality, Laozi appeared, preaching the way of the legendary hermit with miraculous powers, which resulted in a balancing-out. However, even Laozi did not target the entire world.

How about Mohammed? He only preached to Arab peoples, not to the Jews, the Indians, or the Anglo-Saxons. However, as his thoughts and acts contained universal elements, along with the development of transportation and communications methods, the result is that Islam has spread all over the world.

In this way, looking back to the origins, even global religions were unique religions in a specific age for a specific race. Thus, there is no religion that had been a global religion from its foundation. Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Confucianism all used to be ethnic religions

and were only concerned with one race. Later, as the years went by, they spread to other races. Why did they spread all over the world? Although this might be long-winded, it is because they contained the universal messages. That is why they spread beyond the ages and beyond the races. Therefore, I have never heard of a religion that had been preached by targeting people worldwide, from the very beginning.

Based on Shinto to the end

After reconsidering Japanese Shinto, it is, of course, an ethnic religion only for the Japanese. Further, I personally consider that it is fine that Shinto should continue to be a religion only for the Japanese. However, if the teachings and the culture of Shinto have some universal elements, they will spread to the world through mass media, and along with the development of the transportation facilities. Therefore, there is no need to forcibly make Shinto spread to the world, or to let it be known to the world. To preach a way for the Japanese, by targeting the Japanese, is the originality of Shinto. When it comes to the originality of Christianity, the originality of Islam, or of Buddhism, Confucianism, or the philosophies of Laozi and Zhuangzi, they were teachings based on a unique culture and the history of a race, or religious nature. As they had universal content, they spread to the world. However, there is no need to dilute such originality in order to spread it to the world. If that happens, the characteristics would be eliminated totally.

Therefore, given how people who believe in Shinto ought to be, the most important thing is to preach a way that is unique in Japan, and is suitable for the Japanese; to ring the alarm bell, to stick to the original Japanese way, as well as to learn widely and deeply about the universal content. However, it is not necessary to stick thoughtlessly to the universality. Although universal religious nature and universal divinity are important, it is fine if originality based on the unique ethnic culture and history exists, as part of the process of reaching such a religious nature and divinity. It is fine that Shinto targets Japan in Japan, and the Japanese within the Japanese, and that it is deeply rooted in Japanese religious culture and based on tradition. And if Shinto is studded with universal messages, which could move beyond the Japanese people, that would be great. If the Japanese culture and tradition were completely done away with, Shinto would be, in fact, a shallow and dull religion, with no originality.

Therefore, based on Shinto, I will unceasingly communicate about Japan to others. This may sound as if I am a nationalist, however, Japanese Shinto that seeks no limitations is an unparalleled and generous religion, which instantly mixes with foreign cultures and religions. That is the originality of Shinto. What a religion ought to be in the 21st century is to keep on teaching the way of Japan, which contains the Japanese spirit, the universal religious nature, and the universal divinity, by absorbing all cultures, arts and religions in this world, following that spirit of Shinto. Such a view might be the correct stance and the correct way for a religionist, and it is one that I have noticed through my studies of the history of religions and the arts of the world.

Comparison between Renaissance in the Japanese context and Renaissance in the Western context

After learning various kinds of classical orthodoxy, I have two desires: to pursue a more difficult challenge and to pursue things of beauty. This recently led me to the creation of a new art by combining different kinds of classical arts, such as Noh and opera, Noh and the

ballet, Noh and Peking opera and calligraphy and abstract painting. Because of such activities, people started calling me "Renaissance man of the modern age". However, Renaissance in the Japanese context and Renaissance in the Western context are similar and yet different. I look at myself rather as a successor of Renaissance in the Japanese context.

The Renaissance occurred in the West as a counteraction to the preceding Dark Ages of Christianity. But with Christopher Columbus' discovery of America and Discours De La Méthode, or methodological scepticism, by René Descartes, philosophy and science moved in a new direction. In other words, both philosophy and science in the early modern period started from Descartes. "I think; therefore I am" is a famous phrase by Descartes but he also said "I think; therefore God is". However, people started tackling something more tangible than the entity of God. Not only as a reaction to the Christian dogma but also as a reaction to containment and regulations, the Renaissance flourished because it was a celebration of human "hinkaku" and boundless beauty. As a result, the beauty of nudity was pursued in the world of paintings. Michelangelo Buonarroti drew and carved detailed body parts including the pubic region and the pubic hair of David and Jesus Christ. This can also be regarded as a counteraction of the Dark Age. The trend eventually spread to the field of music. The tendency can be found, for instance, in Ludwig Van Beethoven's works. They are certainly renaissance works but also definitely counteractions judging by the way they returned to the Ancient Greek period.

Meanwhile, in my case, a renaissance has never been a product of counteraction.

I believe that art is the mother of religion and, for me, my religion is not monotheistic Christianity or Buddhism but a religion originating in Japan, Shinto.

Since ancient days, the Japanese way of thinking lay in the idea that all living things are precious and things which do not have life are not. Moreover, there existed people who were considered both sacred and secular because the borderline between sacredness and secularity is blurry.

In the Nara period¹⁴⁷ (710-784), Buddhism had just arrived from the Korean Peninsula and the Chinese Continent and focused on education and incantation. That was popularized in the Heian period (794-1185). Eventually, in the Kamakura period¹⁴⁸ (1192-1333), religious aspects uniquely found in Japan or Japan's own interpretation of Buddhism started appearing. Daisetsu Suzuki¹⁴⁹ calls it "Japanese spirituality"¹⁵⁰.

¹⁴⁷ The 73-year period from 710, when Japan's capital was placed in the present city of Nara, in Nara Prefecture.

¹⁴⁸ The period from 1185 to 1333, when the seat of a warrior regime was located in the present city of Kamakura, in Kanagawa Prefecture. The beginning of the feudal society.

¹⁴⁹ A Buddhist philosopher (1780-1966). Had many English writings about Zen Buddhism and Japanese culture, so he strove to introduce Zen overseas.

¹⁵⁰ Suzuki, Daisetsu, *Japanese Spirituality*, Iwanami Shoten, 1979.

Subsequently in the Muromachi period¹⁵¹ (1338-1573), during the era of the 8th shogun Ashikaga Yoshimasa, as the political leverage of the shogunate was weakened, the days of wars and turmoil were about to begin. It is said that Yoshimasa then completely abandoned politics and even if the battle was fought outside of his estate, within the gates he immersed himself in making waka, or traditional Japanese poems, cherishing the beauty of the moon and enjoying orchestral music with wind and string instruments from a boat on a pond.

In the heyday of the Muromachi shogunate, the 3rd shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu¹⁵² constructed the glittering gold Kinkakuji¹⁵³. But it was in the era of Yoshimasa that Japan's own aesthetic sense was developed. They eliminated brightness both in light and colour and found beauty in understated yet refined elegance like sombre silver. Hence, the Ginkakuji¹⁵⁴ constructed by Yoshimasa is not glittering gold but sombre silver. The structure is a kind of embodiment of the aesthetic sense pursuing beauty concealing profound spirituality in subdued rather than loud tones.

Most of the classical arts of Japan that we enjoy today, such as sado (tea ceremony), kado (flower arrangement), Noh and Japanese-style construction and gardens were formed during this period. It was also in the Muromachi period that Zen was brought to Japan. Most of the old and famous temples still existing were built during this period, as well.

While the ethos of Japanese spirituality had already appeared in the Kamakura period, it was after the era of Yoshimasa that Japanese-style culture and arts were formed.

The same sense which finds beauty in sombre silver was the sensitivity to cherish "wabi" (refined rusticity or tranquillity), "sabi" (elegant simplicity) and "shibumi" (understated elegance).

Chronologically speaking, Japanese aesthetic values shifted from "makoto" (faithfulness) in the Nara period to "mononoaware" (pathos), which describes short-lived, graceful, delicate and deep artistic effects in the Heian period. Following were "okashi" (intrigue), and "yugen" (subtle and mysterious expression of beauty). That is not only classy and graceful taste but also something mysterious, for instance, the beauty floating around spectres and ghosts. It also refers to the spiritual and marvellous beauty surrounding gods. It appears when concealed, which is close to the philosophy of Lao-tze and Chung-tze. The term

¹⁵¹ The period of about 180 years after 1573, when the seat of the Ashikaga Shogunate was located in Muromachi, Kyoto. During this period, unique Japanese cultural entities arose one after another, and not a few of them, including Noh and tea ceremony, have been handed down to the present day.

¹⁵² Usui, Nobuyoshi, (edited by the Japan Historical Study Society), *Ashikaga Yoshimitsu*, Yoshikawa Kobunkan (Jinbutsu Sosho), 1960.

¹⁵³ A villa of Ashikaga Yoshimitsu, the third shogun of the Muromachi Period, in Kitayama, Kyoto. The first and second floors were arranged to be in the residence style, and the upper floor was in a Zen Buddhist style, while the outer walls were covered with gold foil -- hence the name Golden Pavilion. Known to be a gorgeous and magnificent building.

¹⁵⁴ A temple built by Ashikaga Yoshimasa, the eighth general of the Ashikaga Period. Although the construction was somewhat similar to the Golden Pavilion, the Silver Pavilion was covered with plain lacquer, in meaningful modesty, as against the gold foil for the former. With the surface luster intentionally weakened, this building is regarded as a symbol of Japanese beauty.

3. "Okuyukashii" (modest) also has the same effect, that is, humbleness and as understated atmosphere increases your desire to see what is concealed inside. From the viewpoint of such sensitivity, showing off in the American-style is out of favour. Rather, the more reserved the expression becomes, the deeper it gets. British culture shares similar feelings. Matured cultures might have more similar traits.

Anyway, "makoto", "mononoaware", "okashi" and "yugen" were followed by "shibumi", "wabi" and "sabi". To find the beauty of sombre silver in expressions that are "tsurezurewaburu" (ennui), "sabishii" (solitariness) and "wabishii" (wintriness) and to be intrigued to see more inside expecting the lustre of life. That is the sensitivity of Shinto. Later, in the Edo period (1603-1867), the culture of townspeople flourished and the aesthetic sense of "iki" (chic) came to be cherished. As to an examination on "iki", I will leave it to another opportunity.

Japanese-style Renaissance and "ami"

As I mentioned above, the Japanese aesthetic sense has shifted, but most concepts which are well known as particularly Japanese were formed in the Muromachi period. That is when the Japanese version of the Renaissance took place.

During the period when such aesthetic nuances were generated, there were prominent people known under the nom de plume ending with "ami". Kan'ami and his son Zeami were founders of Noh. Noh'ami created the basic format of the tea ceremony. He was succeeded by Murata Shuko, Takeno Jouou and Sen no Rikyu who eventually systematically established it. However, it was a painter and linked-verse poet, Noh'ami, who placed importance on the sensitivity to appreciate and evaluate ceramic ware, such as "ohmeibutsu" (the oldest and noblest tea set) as well as the format of chashitsu, or the room in which tea ceremony is performed. A little later, in the Azuchi-Momoyama period (1573-1603), there was Hon'ami Koetsu, who was a blacksmith and connoisseur of swords. He was also an all-round artist who had an exceptional talent in calligraphy, painting and ceramic art. He was truly a Renaissance man. Common among them is that their names end with "ami".

The term "ami" is originally from a Buddhist mantra, "namamitabha", which literally means "I sincerely believe in Amitabha". "Nam" means to "believe in". It implies a secular person searching for salvation by believing in Buddha. "Tabha" means Buddha. It implies a sacred person devoted to ascetic practices to be enlightened and reach nirvana. "Ami" is a word placed between "nam" and "tabha". It implies a person situated in between secularity and sacredness, neither a secular nor a saint. One who has a religious mind but does not engage in one particular religion wholeheartedly. At the same time, "ami" can be a person who is secular and sacred simultaneously cultivating his soul through practicing arts. Just as monks of Zen Buddhism sit in meditation, monks of esoteric Buddhism lead a secluded life in mountains and Christian monks practice asceticism in monasteries, "ami"s will never stop polishing their soul till the moment of death, but it is for the sake of higher art. This way they can create more spiritual works which contain profound inner meaning, spirituality, soul and religious meaning under the superficiality of beauty. "Ami" is a state of mind for the creator of ultimate beauty with "hinkaku".

Using the names ending with "ami" meant to choose such a lifestyle. By calling themselves "ami", they became neither secular nor sacred, and at the same time, both secular and sacred. That was the Japanese Renaissance occurring in the Muromachi period.

Common traits between Michelangelo Buonarroti and "ami"

As for the Western Renaissance, it is possible to find a common trait with "ami" in Michelangelo Buonarroti. Raffaello Santi tried to create something beautiful. However his beauty reminds me of a passage by Confucius: "I have not seen one who loves virtue as he loves beauty". In this case, the term virtue is not necessarily the same as simple virtue as opposed to vice, but refers to spirituality or something more spiritual which would directly fill one's mind and soul with "hinkaku". Raffaello's paintings lack that.

Meanwhile, Michelangelo dared not to draw beautiful paintings. What he wanted to create was something spiritual which would touch one's soul directly. He tried to create something having a spiritual impact, inspiring awe in those who see it. Michelangelo could be called Amichelangelo because his attitude is exactly the same as the "ami".

"Ami"s lived their lives with the same attitude to create works which were not just beautiful like those of Raffaello's but also had a spiritual impact and noble dignity. Later, that turned out to be the characteristics of Japanese Renaissance.

The origin of that kind of spirit can be found in Ippen Shonin, who, as a founder of a Buddhist sect in the Kamakura period, went on a pilgrimage among commoners throughout the country dancing and chanting a prayer of Amitabha.

Buddhism and Zen influenced the formation of the spirit of "ami". The state of Zen, which is to maintain calmness reflecting the inner self rather than outer aspects, can correspond to the calmness stressed in the tea ceremony. Regardless of the surrounding situation, one must peacefully and respectfully search for a serene state of mind.

Zen and the tea ceremony also were widely savoured among samurai, or warriors. Japanese samurai therefore had spirituality and artistic minds and that is why they performed the tea ceremony on one tatami mat brought to a battlefield even though they might not live to see the next day. By doing so, they could vibrantly enjoy and fulfil their given life. Tea ceremony was for savouring the moment of life even on a battleground. The best example of that is Toyotomi Hideyoshi.

Also, there is the term "kenkon kashin" (soul for sword, heart for poetry) in Japan. Samurai were supposed to be completely courageous and fierce, but at the same time, they hid 17-syllable death poems in their helmets. When a samurai ran out of luck and finally were killed, the enemy who killed him would pick up the poem from the dead man's helmet and read it. It was a way to express condolence for the dead opponent and learn his last words. This gentleman-like rite shows that samurai back then were not only fierce but also poetic. They enjoyed literature and arts.

Originally in ancient Japan there was strict and clear class discrimination. However, excellent poets were regarded to be equal under waka regardless of class and age. Poems written by those who did not belong to the upper classes were included and praised in anthologies of poems collected under the Imperial command as "author unknown". The oldest existing anthology of poems "Man'yoshu" (A Collection of a Myriad Leaves) compiled in the 8th century also contains many brilliant poems created by commoners. That is a remarkable trait of Japanese culture, in which people of different classes socialized with each other through waka.

Such bushido, or feudal-military code of behaviour or chivalry among samurai remained through the Kamakura, Muromachi, Sengoku and Edo periods. To be just fierce was not good enough. This spirit has been carried on to this day. To be successful as a hard-working and aggressive businessman is not good enough. The idea that the real man of success should have a mind to cherish songs and poetry and not lose his adventurous mind to continue pursuing dreams as a human is still alive at the bottom of our consciousness.

In the world of kendo, Japanese fencing based on the techniques of the two-handed sword of the samurai, they say that the art of sword is like Zen. Kendo is not for practicing a skill to kill but is regarded as a martial art. In the world of haiku, which respects the mental stage behind the words, they say that haiku and Zen are one of a kind, as well. In the world of the tea ceremony, they say that tea ceremony and Zen are one of a kind. Arts, such as haiku, tea ceremony, kendo and judo especially are closely related to Zen because the skills of art and Zen in the mental stage are connected.

In the world of Noh, they rarely say that Noh and Zen are one of a kind, but in terms of the mental stage, Noh also has something in common with Zen. Actually, Noh, influenced both by Zen and the philosophy of Lao-tze and Chung-tze, tries to express inner energy and inner self, the maximum content through minimum action and words. Zeami called the invisible flow of the content delivered to the audience "the flower". Ordinary practice would not allow the players to express the maximum content through minimum action and words. This is the reason why Noh is difficult.

It is a production which silently conveys mental stages and circumstances. Virtue behind beauty. These reveal one's true position in terms of Zen and express the profoundness and delicacy of the inner spirit which lies deep in one's soul. These are felt as the "hinkaku" of the work and the life of the work. In this regard, Noh is also influenced largely by Zen.

Influence of Shinto shown in Japanese-style Renaissance

As I have been explaining, this is the Japanese-style Renaissance, which, as a backbone, has influenced Japanese arts, aesthetic sensibility and spirituality.

The reason why such a way of thinking has been widely accepted is largely due to Shinto preserved since ancient days. While Buddhism puts emphasis on sacred lifestyles like monks rather than the real living of ordinary people in this life, Shintoism attaches importance to practicing it in the real daily life. According to Shintoism, all ordinary people should lead noble lifestyles.

The influence of the Shintoistic state of mind since ancient days which respects and praises the practice in daily life led to an adjustment of Buddhism the Japanese way. Currently, Japanese high technology is overwhelmingly number one in the world. What we are good at is creating things that can be conveniently used or applied in everyday life. However, when it comes to things that are not for daily use, we are not so good at it. This explains the influence of the Shintoistic spirit at the bottom of our thoughts.

Both tanka and haiku are closely related to everyday life. People are fond of that in which they can find a flare of life, poetic atmosphere and emotional sympathy. It is the life feeling or so-called lifeism, rather than the European way of looking at life or the cosmic view, or

humanism. The difference is between the Japanese-style Renaissance which values the emotional surge when finding a sparkle of life and vitality in everyday life and humanism based on Greek culture.

A style of prayer advocated by Ippen Shonin -dancing and chanting a prayer of Amitabha- was unique to Japan. Japanese-style Buddhism was formed through integration between an ancient style of worshipping ancestors and the imported religion of Buddhism. Basically, Buddhism is a teaching concerning "shogyo mujo" (all things flow and nothing stays the same), "shoho muga" (nothing holds permanent entity) and "nehan seijaku" (when enlightened and having reached nirvana, one would gain peace of mind). The focus is rarely on the reality in this life. Importance is attached on gazing at the eternal truth without being driven by emotions. However, Japanese Buddhism is different. It teaches us to respect the lustre of life in everyday life, such as being moved, delighted and distressed, while pursuing the eternal truth.

Both tea ceremony and flower arrangement focus on the sparkle of life particular to each of the four seasons. It is important to arrange flowers and savour tea in ways that convey the atmosphere of spring in spring and summery ways in summer. Noh has the artistic modulations of "jo" (introduction) "ha" (exposition) and "kyu" (a rapid finale) and plays for performance are selected according to the season.

As I mentioned above, the reason why the Western Renaissance values humanism is due to the counteraction of the Dark Age of Christianity. Ancient Greek culture, the roots of humanism, is said to be an art created together by Greek gods and humans. In Japan's case, we have Shinto as a base. Hence, every time other philosophies including Buddhism were brought in, we eventually wrapped them in Japanese ways of feeling things and changed them into styles more suitable for us.

Reasons I Tackle European and Asian Arts

Until now, I have stated my views on the essence of Japanese Shinto, as well as European and Japanese cultures. Based on these, I would like to briefly explain my reasons for tackling European and Asian arts next.

First, as to why I engage in Asian arts, the reason, in essence, is that my own identity lies in Japanese arts. As stated earlier, Shinto basically performs the invisible work of accepting Asian thoughts, signified by Zen, and European thoughts, represented by Christianity, and also of combining both of these thoughts. Because I was born and brought up in the Shinto culture, and because I have lived with the self-consciousness of a Shinto follower, I naturally have strong self-confidence, or self-consciousness, regarding my ability to accept any cultural elements without resistance and blend them into myself. Such self-consciousness was further deepened as I practiced Noh and tea ceremony, while I was young. The state of deep enlightenment, which can be found in the foundation of Noh, tea ceremony, or calligraphy, is the identity of the Japanese soul, and to go farther, the identity of Asians.

All the more because of this, I can perform Japanese and Asian artistic expression. However, this alone will mean self-conceit. It is to eliminate such self-conceit that I spend almost as much time on European arts as I do on Noh, calligraphy, tea ceremony and other Japanese arts. The reason I play the piano is the same, and the same is also true regarding

playing the violin, composing music, conducting an orchestra and drawing paintings. Personally considering that the final form of such arts is opera, I am now doing my best to challenge opera.

Why opera? The reason is, quite simply, because the highest peak of European arts, so to speak, is opera. Certainly, the performance of an orchestra can move the soul, while violin and piano have excellence of their own. But when a person sings with his or her own voice, the performance of the orchestra is nothing but the accompaniment. After all, the raw voice bestowed by god is the most wonderful, so in opera, opera singers play main parts, and the conductor and orchestra become only side players. In addition, opera has elements of drama and stage arts. In other words, opera is a synthesis art. In opera, musicality, dramatic nature and artistic character are ultimately systematized, so it can be said that each opera includes all art elements, such as stage art, stage setting, clothing, musical instruments and the human voice. This is why I practice opera.

By performing European arts in this way, it is possible to understand not only European culture but also the method of European people's thinking. As a result, I have been able to obtain European friends, which is a very positive factor. As I understand opera, which has its own culture, and as I can play the piano, conduct an orchestra and draw paintings, European people readily accept me, and I can enjoy exchanges with them heartily. Consequently, the world of my consciousness has expanded greatly. If I had no chance to touch European arts, I would remain embodying only the Shinto spirit.

Nevertheless, performing only Japanese arts and European arts is not well balanced. It is necessary, after all, to understand Asian arts. Based on this thinking, I turned my attention to Asian arts. Considering, in this connection, that the Asian art that retained an excellent level and long tradition was Peking Opera, and that there was no other Asian art besides Peking Opera that can compete with Noh in Japan and opera in Europe, I intended to learn Peking Opera. Therefore, I began taking lessons from Mr. Wang Jinlu, an expert of Peking Opera, and Mr. Ye Peng, who is an excellent singer, two years ago. Up to now, I have accumulated much practice, and I have staged three Peking Opera items on the stage. I was able to understand, based on this experience, that Peking Opera has maintained strong Chinese tradition for 3,000 years.

Because I consider it possible to become an international person only after pursuing traditional arts, irrespective of whether they are from the East or West, I am practicing them in a balanced manner. To practice Japanese and Asian arts, to refine my soul in the field of my own identity, while bodily learning European arts, which are more extensive, beautiful and full of joy – isn't this the quickest way to understand the world?

Finally, however, I would like to return to the identity of the Japanese, and I hope that European people will understand Japanese culture and Japanese mentality. I hope that European people will learn the method of thinking by Asians, and what lies at the back of Asians' minds, through arts and their performance. Therefore, I would like to introduce Japanese and Asian cultural composition and mental structure to European and American peoples. So, I am making various efforts with this as my ultimate purpose.

As part of such activities, I arranged for the inauguration of a lecture course entitled "Japanese management," and the establishment of an organization to examine Japanese-

style management, at Wolverhampton University, in the U.K. This university is located in Birmingham, the cradle of the Industrial Revolution, where many Japanese enterprises have advanced and are operating. Since establishing the organization to study Japanese enterprises, I go there once a year, to teach Japanese management. My wish, in this regard, is for the British people to know much about Japanese culture by learning the Japanese method of corporate management.

In China, I am teaching at Qinghua University and Zhejiang University. In Zhejiang University, I give lectures twice a year, as a guest professor of the Japanese Culture Research Institute, while at Qinghua University, I serve as a guest professor of the History Department, also giving lectures twice a year. The theme of these lectures is the history of Sino-Japanese exchanges in the modern era. As for a women's college, I give such lectures at China Women's College, in Beijing, a school of the highest academic level among universities of its kind. As for other institutions, I also serve as a guest professor at Academy of Chinese Opera, which is a college of Peking Opera. In this institution, I deliver lectures on themes of artistic expression in stage arts, including comparison of Peking Opera and Noh, and the difference in stage setting between Peking Opera and ballet/European opera, several times a year, while learning Peking Opera.

So, currently I am in charge of two courses in the U.K. and seven courses in China, at a total of nine universities. The content of lectures delivered in China concerns comparison of cultures and arts, and I usually say, "In opera, expression is this, while in the case of Noh, the expression adopted is this. As for Peking Opera, the theme is expressed in this way, while in ballet, this is the expression used." By giving such lectures, I aim to further enhance students' understanding of Peking Opera, their traditional public entertainment.

The public entertainment of individual countries incorporates their respective long histories and cultures. Even so, Noh is not everything, and Peking Opera is not everything, and opera is not everything. They have fine points, however, and the purpose of my teaching at the universities is to objectively view these fine points and help students' understanding of mutual cultures and histories. The reason I can do this is considered to be that I have acquired the culture of Shinto, a culture of polytheism. As stated earlier, a polytheistic religion has a supreme god, but it has no absolute god, so that it is possible to consider everything in a relative manner. Because relative thinking is adopted, it is possible to combine excellent points of various matters. And if one's own uniqueness is added to the results of the combination, will not more creative arts and more creative culture be produced as a consequence? I believe that production of such creative arts and culture is the mission imposed on Shinto in the 21st century.

CHAPTER FOUR:

MY OWN METHODOLOGY RELATED TO ARTS

Striving to Make Threefold Efforts Compared with Others

"Do I have talent for drawing pictures? Do I have ability for calligraphy?" People who are trying to challenge new activities, irrespective of whether the area concerned is art, or management, or sports, are likely to ask themselves these questions. This may be natural, in a sense. If a person assumes, at the beginning, that any attempt will be unsuccessful if there is no talent or ability, however, it may be equivalent to throwing out a life, so to speak. It is better not to consider talent or ability, as much as possible, when starting something, or in the course of doing it.

It is not true that I myself did not consider talent or ability, when I started something. When I was young, I always asked myself if I had a talent or ability. The conclusion I reached was that I had no special talent, and that I was an ordinary person. I was not a genius like Kumagusu Minakata¹⁵⁵, who learned a whole foreign language dictionary by heart, or I had no such power of memory like Nobuo Origuchi¹⁵⁶, who completely remembered Daizo-Kyouten¹⁵⁷ Scriptures. Nonuo Origuchi was a Shinto scholar, an old Japanese thought researcher, a folklore scholar, a poet and a historian with a strong power of memory, and I was not that wise. I had no strong "digestive ability" like Kukai or Onisaburo Deguchi. I was a commonplace man like men everywhere.

Then, are there no possibilities for a commonplace man like me? The answer is that the commonplace man must have possibilities. If the target is limited to a most important one for which I am ready to stake my life, and if three-fold efforts compared with those of other people are made, I must be able to achieve the target. Although not so skilfully as done by geniuses, I must be able to attain the target.

Based on this thought, I have been performing work and artistic activities 365 days a year; that is, without skipping even a single day, based on the slogan of "threefold efforts compared with others." The cause of my determination to do this was my encounter with Mr. Michihiro Matsumoto, a simultaneous English-Japanese interpreter. When I was about age 35, he said to me, "You seem to work hard, but I have worked without taking rest even on Sundays or national holidays for the past five years."

"It is wonderful," I said. "Why do you make such efforts?"

¹⁵⁵ A biologist (1867-1941), who also had deep knowledge about ethnology. Known for his strong memory capacity, he once reportedly swallowed each page of a foreign language dictionary, after learning all the information it contained, eventually learning the entire content of the dictionary.

Kasai, Kiyoshi (edited by the Japan Historical Study Society), *Kumagusu Minakata*, Yoshikawa Kobunkan (Jinbutsu Sosho), 1967.

¹⁵⁶ A national language scholar and a poet. In particular, he knew much about old literature and ethnology. Edited by Nishimura, Toru, *Dictionary of Nobuo Origuchi*, Taishukan Shoten, 1988.

¹⁵⁷ A collective name for Buddhist scriptures consisting of 11,970 volumes.

"As a matter of fact, because I learned that Kanbi Fujiyama¹⁵⁸, the comic actor, did so, I decided to follow suit," he answered.

According to Mr. Matsumoto, Kanbi Fujiyama performed on stage without any absence, even on Sundays, national holidays and New Year's Day, for the past 15 years. On New Year's Day, there was a New Year's performance, while during the Bon Festival season, the Bon cooling performance was held, so there were no days for absence throughout the year. In addition, he continued such a hard schedule of two performances, in the daytime and at night, every day for the 15 years. Of course, even if he caught a cold or developed a fever, he performed anyway. So, Mr. Matsumoto reportedly asked, "Mr. Kanbi Fujiyama, if you give two performances each day for 365 days a year, the yearly total of the performances is more than 700 times. You continue performances for a long period. Why can you do that?"

To this question, Kanbi Fujiyama replied bluntly without batting an eye, "The knack is to not consider it hard." "To not consider it hard" was a very simple, plain expression. It was a good saying, which could not be uttered except by a person who overcame many barriers.

By the way, why did Kanbi Fujiyama have to work a superman-like schedule for as long as 15 years. The reason was very simple. He had huge loans. According to hearsay, Kanbi Fujiyama was extremely generous and broad-minded – or loose, in more proper expression – and because of this wasteful habit, he spent all his money, or more, as soon as it had been earned. Accordingly, his borrowing grew and grew, even after he worked more and more, and the total of his borrowings expanded to the level of hundreds of millions of yen before he was aware of it, and he was eventually chased by gangsters. Therefore, he reportedly had to continue such a hard schedule of performing twice a day for one year non-stop.

The huge borrowing was repaid, in time. But his subsequent actions were really characteristic of him. Kanbi Fujiyama said, "Although performing twice a day was really tiring both mentally and physically, it was the most pleasant experience for an entertainer, because guests were so glad with it. God's blessing of work for an entertainer must be this. If so, although the repaying of debts has ended, I will continue this pace of work." So, Kanbi Fujiyama challenged continuing his stage performing.

Probably because Kanbi Fujiyama had such resolution and vitality, he was able to perform on stage without absence for 15 years. At that time, Kanbi Fujiyama seemingly issued an aura from all parts of his body. Sanshi Katsura, a Rakugo¹⁵⁹ storyteller, frequently went to see Kanbi Fujiyama, when he came to a deadlock in his entertainment activities. When Sanshi Katsura entered the dressing room several minutes before the start of Kanbi Fujiyama's performance, Fujiyama asked, "Oh, dear Sanshi, are you doing well?" To this, the visiting comic storyteller answered, "I am doing well."

This was nothing but an exchange of greetings, but strangely enough, Sanshi Katsura said he became full of courage and willingness to work. Even if he visited Kanbi's dressing room, he did not seek any special consulting. By exchanging greetings in the form of a question,

¹⁵⁸ A representative comedian (1929~1990) in Japan after the Second World War.

¹⁵⁹ A stage performance in which one speaker talks about a comic story, by reviving dialogues between persons, and thereby amuses the audience.

"Are you doing well?" he was given vigour and courage that cannot be adequately expressed.

This act is "the activity of inducing others to act suitably without doing anything."

Generally speaking, there are three methods of teaching, or guiding, others. The first is to teach by means of words and actions. The second is to show a model; this is often referred to as "teaching by means of one's back." And the third – and highest level – method of teaching is this "activity of inducing others to act suitably without doing anything." No oral teaching is given, no specific action is taken. Only by meeting someone, and exchanging words with him, the person concerned is influenced. This is "inducing others to act suitably."

A person called Ryusuke Toyama was good at "inducing others to act suitably without doing anything." Ryusuke Toyama was a younger brother of Mitsuru Toyama, a well-known right-wing leader in pre-war years. At a certain time, a friend of Ryusuke's, who was suffering from tuberculosis, was discouraged, and said, "I'm doomed. This disease is cureless. I have to wait for death." Learning that, Ryusuke visited his friend in the latter's sickroom. Seeing the ailing friend vomit bloody phlegm, Ryusuke drank it, and encouraged his friend, saying, "You see, this is nothing, isn't it? You should not be so disheartened." Toyama was so kind, from his heart, and because of his action, he eventually contracted tuberculosis, becoming hospitalized. One day, Sogen Omori visited Ryusuke Toyama's patient room.

Sogen Omori was a Zen monk, and at the same time a master in the course of living with much experience in calligraphy and Japanese fencing. One reason for Omori's visit to Ryusuke Toyama's sickroom was that they were old acquaintances, as Sogen Omori studied the teachings of Mitsuru Toyama, Ryusuke's elder brother and a right-wing leader. However, there was another reason. At that time, Sogen Omori was going to various places in an effort to organize a Japanese fencing group. When the problem of who should head the planned organization arose, Omori immediately suggested that the most appropriate man was Mitsuru Toyama, the right-wing leader, and he personally visited Toyama at his house, to seek his assumption of the post.

"Mr. Toyama, everything will go smoothly, if you become the chairman of the planned organization," Sogen Omori said. "Please assume this post."

Hearing that, Toyama replied, but he indirectly declined Omori's request, saying, "However, Ryusuke, my younger brother, is more appropriate than I for the post of chairman." But Omori was not a man to meekly give up on what he wanted. Of course, Omori knew the character of Ryusuke Toyama, but for the chairman of the organization, Mitsuru Toyama, whose fame was known widely throughout the country, was suitable. In addition, Ryusuke, who was ill and therefore in bed, could not be expected to perform necessary duties as the chairman of the organization.

"But Mr. Ryusuke Toyama is sick in bed, isn't he?"

"He is ill in body, but healthy in mind," Toyama replied.

At that, Omori said, "I understand," and he had Ryusuke Toyama assume the post of the chairman of the fencing organization. Because of such a development of events, Sogen Omori visited Ryusuke's sickroom. However, Omori was struggling with thought regarding a

very difficult issue concerning management of the organization. Believing it was necessary to hear the chairman's opinion, Omori explained the difficult issue to Ryusuke, saying that the situation was such, and the problem was such and such. Then, Ryusuke Toyama sat up, and, joining his hands, he only said, "It must be troublesome. Thank you very much for your efforts." Thus, Toyama said nothing other than that, but Sogen Omori felt that his whole body became full of courage, and while he was not aware of the time, he found a solution to the problem. This is "inducing others to act suitably without doing anything," which means that, although nothing is done, the contact with the person will help conversion and changes of quality, so that an answer can be found by oneself. This is referred to, in the words of Zen, as "inducing... without doing anything." Without taking model actions or giving helpful teachings, only contact with the person concerned will naturally cause alteration. Kanbi Fujiyama had such ability.

By meeting Kanbi Fujiyama, who continued performing twice a day for more than 15 years, without taking a day off, even on a single occasion, irrespective of Sundays, national holidays and New Year's Day, Mr. Michihiro Matsumoto obtained energy, power and spirit from him. After the interview with Fujiyama, Mr. Matsumoto felt, "This is wonderful. I will follow his pattern." Accordingly, Mr. Matsumoto continued efforts for five years without a day off.

Hearing this story, I thought that Mr. Matsumoto's name was very good, because it means, in Japanese, that a pine tree (Matsumoto) spreads thought. "This must be the teaching of god," I felt, and I started following his and Kanbi Fujiyama's actions. "I don't have unrivalled power of memory like Kumagusu Minakata, nor am I a genius like Nobuo Origuchi, and I lack deep knowledge like Kukai. If a commonplace man like me is to lead an excellent life, it is necessary to exert several-fold efforts compared with other people, after all. If I enjoy life as other people, and use time as others do, I will not be different from these people. Only if I strive as Kanbi Fujiyama did, will I, a common man, be able to lead an excellent life. And if Kanbi Fujiyama continued his efforts for 15 years, I will do so throughout my life." I made this determination when I was 35.

Subsequently, I exerted utmost efforts in all kinds of activities, including my work, artistic activities, religious activities and welfare actions, without taking a day off, irrespective of Sundays, national holidays, New Year's Day and the Bon Festival, for a total of 15 years, until now. This is why I receive some positive evaluation from others regarding my paintings, calligraphy and music composition. Of course, I am far from being like first-class artists, but even so, I can enjoy a certain kind of favourable rating, solely because of my endeavours – not because of talents or capability. All of them have been due to my strenuous efforts. If I am asked if I have talents or capability, I cannot boastfully say yes, but concerning the question as to my efforts, I secretly consider that I may be allowed to proudly say, "I have been making threefold efforts compared with others, and I also intend to do so hereafter."

Three Points for Mastering Some Arts or Skills

To master anything, which may not be limited to art, aren't three elements: the willingness to finish learning it by all means, a sincere mind to humbly learn it without becoming arrogant and perseverance to master it no matter how much time may be needed, necessary? If Chinese teaching is applied here, these elements can be expressed with the three words: firmness, sincerity and permanence.

"Firmness" means solidity. It is stiff to the last. It indicates maintenance of the mental target no matter what may happen. It is self-initiative in the good sense of the word. Unless there is strong will when a decision is made, a lofty spirit cannot be retained, and even if an objective is set, it may be a weak, unreliable matter. In such a state, the target art or skills cannot be achieved.

In the case of challenging entrance examinations for universities, for instance, it can hardly be said that a target is set if entry to a certain university is simply longed for, as in "I hope to enter that university." Instead, concentrate on your study with firm determination to "enter Tokyo University by all means, and serve society by becoming a respectable man!" This is the act of setting an aim on something. If the mind is concentrated so much on the target, deities and protective spirits cannot but want to help you. If I am a god, I will not spare efforts to help that child from all fields. If he is about to become frustrated, I will cheer him up, saying, "Hold out, hold out!"

If a person continues his efforts further while receiving support from the invisible world, he will come to a limitation point. If his body, spirit and intellectual power reach the limit, and he may be about to die, and the future condition of his body, etc., becomes unknown, the person's soul finally cries. In Shinto, this state is expressed as "the spirit is broken." When this state is reached, a self different from the usual self appears, and work or product of a level unbelievable to oneself will become possible. This is why I make a point of driving myself to such a state in the case of learning paintings, or calligraphy, or music, as stated in Chapter 1. If the person is a genius, he will be able to produce wonderful works smoothly, without resorting to the aforementioned practice. However, a commonplace man with little blessing by heaven must "do" to the limit vigorously to the last. Because I consider this, I continue tackling paintings or calligraphy for such a long time as 13 hours a day.

"Sincerity" is the mind to reflect on past actions. It means to humbly reflect on what is insufficient in one's own training, and to unify word and deed. It is sincerity because what was said is actually done. There are no deities or souls who do not accept sincerity. Therefore, it is also the secret of receiving the support of god.

When applying sincerity to the field of arts, I think of a mental posture to continue studying humbly without becoming haughty. It signifies learning by a good teacher and striving compliantly as instructed, and improving oneself step by step, based on an objective observation. In other words, it means to not become self-conceited or self-satisfied.

Earlier I stated that, in order to carry through firmness, self-initiative, in the good sense of the word, is necessary, as can be expressed in the determination to finish something no matter who may oppose to it. Depending on the case or the person concerned, there is a possibility that a self, in the literal meaning of the word, may come to the fore. The factor that modifies it is sincerity, and if a person accepts the instructor's suggestions compliantly, his progress will be rapid, while there is no fear of his practice becoming self-conceited.

And finally, "permanence." The main portion of the Chinese character representing this concept is a hieroglyphic character indicating the sun rising from the horizon and setting below the ground again. Thus, it shows the state of the sun continually illuminating the earth. In other words, a mind like the sun is permanence, and based on my experience, the factor that is most important in attaining some art or skills is this permanence.

For example, no matter how strong determination may be when starting to learn something, mastery cannot be attained, if efforts are stopped midway. No matter how he may take lessons compliantly, and display sincerity to the limit of his ability, mastery cannot be achieved, if efforts are discontinued midway. In other words, firmness and sincerity will become valid only if permanence is carried through to the last, so I believe permanence should be given the utmost importance.

Permanence can be divided into two kinds, namely, "consistently" (continuously) and "successfully" (successively). For example, when saying, "it has continued raining since this morning," there may be a case in which the rain continued without a pause, and there may also be a case in which rain continued intermittently. The former is a "consistent" (continuous) case, and the latter is a "successful" (successive) case. By the way, ending after once or twice is expressed as "inconsistent" in English. It goes without saying that this cannot be permanent.

Then, which of "consistently" (continuously) and "successfully" (successively) is ideal? Of course, "consistently" (continuously) is better. Actually, however, a matter does not process in accordance with the ideal in many cases. Not infrequently, among human beings, learning becomes intermittent, because the person concerned forgets learning due to the heavy pressure of work or home activities, or he/she is unable to take time because of overseas work, etc. In such cases, keep taking lessons to the last "successfully" (successively) or intermittently without abandoning the habit. I think this is the most important mental attitude in mastering something. In brief, it is important to continue up to death, irrespective of the process in the middle.

If there is something important to accomplish some art, apart from firmness, sincerity and permanence, isn't it the experience of a sense of attainment? A sense of accomplishment -- stemming from the knowledge that the soul was improved, although the process for that purpose was extremely tormenting; that better products were manufactured despite difficulties; that many people were pleased with the result, and that, because of the work, great contribution could be made -- is an encouragement more than anything else, as is well known by people who have had such experience.

To feel that sense of accomplishment, it may have rather negative results to set targets in a very long time span. In my case, I have set the target of practicing some arts throughout my life, but for the purpose of feeling a sense of accomplishment, it may be better to set objectives in shorter ranges, such as 1 year, or 5 years, or 10 years at the longest. In the case of a person who is not so confident in his own power of will, the course to be chosen should be to set a target for the coming year, to set another target based on the sense of accomplishment felt, if the original target is attained and to do so subsequently.

Irrespective of the method adopted, it is all right if the practice is not terminated midway. I am confident that, if practice is continued in the unit of 1 year, or 5 years, or 10 years, with tough perseverance and without saying "I'm tired of this," anything can be accomplished. There is nothing in this world that cannot be attained based on this formula. If something cannot be achieved, it is because of a lack of will to do it, or insufficient ingenuity in challenging the feat.

If it could not be accomplished, however, the person concerned should not blame himself for the weakness of his own will or lack of guts. He had better consider that the reason was insufficient ingenuity or a poor method of doing the practice.

I have repeatedly stated, in my books, that the Chinese characters indicating reflection means somewhat too little. In other words, the right state of reflection is to limit the action of reflection to a smaller degree, and such a deep degree of reflection as to discourage the will to rise again is not a virtue or any other positive act. The action of reflection may seem to be an ethically respectable action at first glance, but it is necessary to understand that excessive reflection may destroy the human character. The important thing for us is to live bravely in a forward-looking manner, based on the results of reflection, and if we lose the courage to live on, as a result of reflection, the meaning of the reflection becomes incomprehensible. Therefore, reflection is necessary, but such deep reflection as to damage one's own mind, should not be implemented, by any means.

This is a kind of digression, but, at any rate, all you should do is to set the target at a level considered to be attainable for the time being, and then to silently make strenuous efforts while remembering firmness, sincerity and permanence. Even if you feel the limits of your ability, and even if you become tired of practice, you can accomplish your target, if you fully display the power of will and spirit to overcome the difficulties. You can master calligraphy, painting and music, without fail. It is not clear whether you will reach the level of first class people, but if your efforts are genuine, you may reach or surpass the first-class level. But apart from the problem of whether or not you will become first-class, you can reach a level not to be ashamed of even if your art is exposed to the eyes or ears of others. This is not incorrect because, actually, I myself was able to reach that level.

It Is Important to Continue Practice, Even with Occasional Rest

Since setting targets at age 35, I have been strenuously exerting myself to the present day for work and artistic activities without taking a day off, while remembering firmness, sincerity and permanence. However, because I manage multiple companies, it is fairly difficult, in fact, to constantly engage in artistic activities. If artistic activities are to be compatible with work, there is no other way but to do them successively. Even so, I did not discontinue practice but engaged in it perseveringly, but in my case, the method of doing practice seemed to be substantially different from that of others.

In taking tea ceremony lessons, for instance, such a lesson is given by an instructor usually once a week. This means that such lessons are usually provided 4 times a month, and 48 times a year. In my case, in which not only tea ceremony but also three other arts: calligraphy, Japanese-style painting and Noh, were learned, in addition to concurrent enforcement of work, it was impossible to keep the pace of once a week. Therefore, I changed the frequency of each kind of lessons to once a month, and instead the time for one lesson was extended to 13 or 14 consecutive hours. Namely, I engaged in concentrated enforcement of artistic practice. Under this arrangement, I started practice, considering it possible to learn many kinds of arts even at the pace of once a month, and to carry out practice equivalent to 4 lessons a month. When this was actually undertaken, however, it turned out to involve very high hurdles, so to speak.

First, instructors who accepted such a style of lessons could not be easily found – this was the 1st hurdle. Most instructors refused the request, saying that there was no such precedence, or that it was out of common sense, and almost no instructors smoothly accepted my request. Fortunately in my case, I was able to encounter, through a friend, instructors who were willing to accept the request, but generally speaking, this hurdle must be quite high.

Another thing was the difficulty of continuing practice for 13 or 14 hours a day – this was the 2nd hurdle. Because I explained this in detail in Chapter 1, I will not repeat it, but when I sat continually on a chair for 4 or 5 hours, my whole body became painful, as if it were crushed. In addition, my consciousness became delirious. When this limit status was overcome, I entered a world beyond expression, as I stated. Considering whether I would be able to overcome this point, while questioning if my “firmness, sincerity and permanence” are true or not, I was always able to overcome such difficulties.

These were lessons of calligraphy, painting, Noh and tea ceremony, but there were many subjects to learn, including Peking Opera, opera and ballet. Not only that, I had to manage my companies, give management consultation and engage in daily activities as a man of religion, so I was tremendously busy. Frankly speaking, it is rather correct to say that I was unable to take a day off for 15 years, rather than that I have been learning arts without missing a single day for the 15 years. Even so, as I stated in the introduction, I was able to obtain certificates of attainment for calligraphy, tea ceremony and Noh, and felt a sense of achievement and satisfaction at my accomplishment. No doubt, these will also become irreplaceable treasures for me in the future.

It is also a fact that, now that I am beyond age 50, my physical strength has considerably weakened, and I can no longer progress ahead as recklessly as before. In my 30s, I frequently delivered religious lectures, or provided consulting services to others, for 48 hours continuously, without sleeping. At present, however, my perseverance usually runs out after self-concentration for about 16 hours. Probably, both my physical strength and mental perseverance may have become half of their previous levels. Even so, it is my new determination, at age 50, to continue practice, even sometimes taking rest in the midway, up to my last day without discontinuing it.

Overcoming the Tired Mind through Use of the “Deadline Effect”

As I stated earlier, a mind of “firmness, sincerity and permanence” is required to accomplish any art, irrespective of its genre, and practicing it is really hard. In my case, too, it was really distressing. When I say I practiced lessons in a concentrated manner for 13 or 14 hours per day, you may consider that I have a power of concentration by nature. Truthfully, however, I was originally of a capricious type, and with regard to preferable matters, I could concentrate myself for many hours, but regarding others, I soon threw out anything. The reason I acquired my present power of concentration was solely due to my personal training, and presumably nothing else. But the process of training was really hard, to repeat myself.

The hardest point was to overcome my tiring mind. If lessons had soon led to advancement, I would not have become tired of them. However, irrespective of calligraphy or painting, a sense of progress was not soon felt, and taking lessons was considered to be meaningless,

and permanence in "firmness, sincerity and permanence" did not last. In a nutshell, I became tired of practice.

In such a case, one method may be to chide and encourage myself, saying, "Use guts, and hold out!" Some effects may be expected from spurring the weakening heart. Of course, I did that. Because resorting to this action alone was felt to be unreliable; however, I attempted to use methods to overcome the tiring of the mind, from different angles. One such method was using the "deadline effect," as it is called in psychology.

In the case of tea ceremony, only doing practice will make the person concerned tedious, because there are no dramatic factors in it. To make the practice dramatic in some of its aspect, an announcement meeting is used for the purpose. If it is desirable to hold an announcement meeting once a year, the date and place are set in advance once a year, and guidance letters, stating that a tea ceremony meeting will be held, are sent to persons concerned. Because guests will surely come, and requests have already been made to the instructor, the person concerned cannot remain idle, practicing desperately in preparation for the tea ceremony meeting. This was the "deadline effect," as it is called in psychology, and practice under such a situation was enormously full of content. Based on my experience, its study effects were felt to be 3 to 5 times more than in the case of usual practice.

Regarding Noh and "utai" (Noh-related singing), doing practice only was boring, so announcement meetings were held, without exception. In my case, because fortunately I had some economic power, and because there were some disciples, I personally held such announcement meetings myself. After obtaining the permission of instructors, I set the date and place, and sent guidance letters saying that a Noh announcement meeting would be held. After tickets were printed, it would become impossible to remain idle. During the period of one month, and particularly 1 to 2 weeks, before the announcement meeting, all-night practices were carried out almost every day. At any rate, I had to practice in a desperate mood. This was the "deadline effect," and in other words, "enormous strength at the fire scene." Because the person concerned concentrates efforts at a certain time point, his progress will be far faster than that of other people who engage in practice constantly once a week. In the case of Noh and "utai," I drew out my ability through this method.

The situation was exactly the same regarding calligraphy. After I said, "I will hold an exhibition meeting," or "I will exhibit my works at a calligraphic exhibition," the instructor gave me careful guidance. The instructor hoped that I would get a prize, if I submitted my products to the exhibition, and he would be put to shame, if I, his disciple, made a failure at such an occasion, so he taught me energetically. Like parents feeling thrilled when their child runs in a school athletic meet, the instructor seems to be in suspense when his disciples announce their products. In this sense, holding of an announcement meeting is also a method of making the instructor frantic. At any rate, it seemed that my calligraphic competence gradually improved, as I held announcement meetings of my own several times.

As for singing, participation in contests was the "deadline effect" for me. Of course, the instructor taught me as energetically as he could. Above all, however, I became extremely tense when it came to taking part in a competition. My heart pounded, and when I saw my instructor, I found his face stiff with strong tension. Needless to say, such tension, a power of competition and earnestness, were the factors that drew out capability.

Yet, in my case, I did not study music from its basics, so I lacked general knowledge about music. I was unable to read music scores, such as "Choruebungen" or "Concone," so my ability as a singer did not develop simply as a result of my participation in contests. I was obstructed by barriers of real ability. Making up my mind to begin music study from the basics, therefore, I resolved to sit for the entrance examination of a music college, and started preparatory study at a vehement pace. However, this study was not a target that could be easily mastered. Test subjects were actual piano practice, "Choruebungen" and paper tests, namely music theory. Although music theory was not so difficult, I had much difficulty regarding actual piano practice. As stated in Chapter 1, I began taking piano lessons at age 35. However, even though I practiced playing piano for more than 13 hours a day, I was unable to feel any progress in piano-playing, and I was seriously uneasy as to if I had the ability to pass a college examination. To dispel the unrest, I made super-diligent practice of sitting at a piano throughout a day, without eating or sleeping, in a short-period concentration attempt. Probably as a result of such efforts, I was able to pass the entrance examination, becoming a music college student. The experience at the time proved to be of great value to me. Of course, my studying of singing music from basics, and growth of my ability, were greatly pleasant developments for me. However, my graduation from a music college, as well as the change of people's evaluation about me, was greatly encouraging. I was not engaged in singing for other people, but it made a great difference in my mentality when I was regarded as a singer who studied music in a formal course, rather than an amateur singer fond of singing. I think this may be another point that passes through "firmness, sincerity and permanence."

In this way, considering the "deadline effect," as it is called in psychology, I drove myself into positions of holding a tea ceremony meeting for tea ceremony, a flower arrangement exhibition for flower arrangement, a calligraphic exhibition for calligraphy, a Noh announcement meeting for Noh and an entrance examination for a music college for music, and carried through "firmness, sincerity and permanence" through these actions. After all, the important thing is considered to create an environment in which it is required to practice, isn't it? And if the creation of such an environment is pursued in consideration of each person's own position, he must be able to carry through "firmness, sincerity and permanence." Of course, his capability must grow rapidly at the same time.

My Method of Dissipating Stress

As I carried through "firmness, sincerity and permanence," it was inevitable for stress to accumulate. The process of stress accumulation is considered to be different from person to person, and in my case, it comes from a lack of sleep, then from fatigue and finally from writing manuscripts for publication. I have become accustomed to a lack of sleep, and physical fatigue has become no problem, but regarding the writing of manuscripts for publication, my nerves become broken, and I suffer from neurosis when the deadline approaches, so I have the deadline extended, in an effort to control stress, based on my self-adjustment. Even so, stress accumulated considerably, and I sometimes asked myself why I should drive myself to such a precarious position, and if I am really happy, although I live under such a tight schedule. To describe it plainly, I sometimes considered my life empty and unfortunate.

At such a time, I always contemplated "What is happiness, after all?" And my conclusion was that happiness is a matter of momentary nature.

People often speak about a "happy life" or a "fortunate method of living." However, if the matter is thoroughly considered, a happy life cannot originally exist, because happiness is felt momentarily. The content of happiness is the instant when a breakthrough is felt or when pleasure is sensed, so happiness is of a momentary nature. Accordingly, my definition of happiness is to feel momentary pleasures.

Compared with such pleasures, isn't there greater meaning in the sense of accomplishment after a significant task is achieved, based on strenuous efforts, and in the sense of satisfaction obtained after some task was helpful to people in society, and many people became happy and pleasant because of it? Other kinds of happiness are, in short, nothing but pleasure of a passing nature, felt when people are freed from stress, torment, or poverty. Therefore, happiness may be instantaneous. If it is possible to devise many ideas to enable enjoyment of momentary pleasures, non-sleep days and the life of not taking a day off, irrespective of Sundays, national holidays and the New Year's Day, must go on.

As such, I made various arrangements to feel momentary happiness. The greatest pleasure for me at present is angling. Even so, I do not enjoy angling for a whole day. Happiness is of a momentary nature, and to begin with, I have no time to enjoy fishing for a whole day. Usually, I angle for a set period of 2 hours, after a major religious event is over, or after I finish writing some manuscripts. This short period is irreplaceably valuable time to rid myself of stress.

If I perform a religious event, I feel extreme agony, due to the battle of souls, while during writing manuscripts, I experience torment similar to my brain breaking apart. For these reasons, two hours of angling after the end of such anguish is an incomparable pleasure for me. Of course, I have a series of angling articles for fishing in rivers, seas and lakes, and before I go angling, one of my secretaries makes a point of conducting prior examination, and reporting to me on a place likely to produce a good catch. I dangle a fishing line based on his report, but it is all right whether I catch fish or not. At any rate, it is pleasant to be in the sun, to be exposed to the wind and to try to catch fish.

I also play golf, and the purpose is to feel momentary happiness. Also, several times a year, I enjoy eating highest-class dishes at first-class restaurants or Japanese-style restaurants (ryotei), together with young employees of my companies, but such enjoyment also represents happiness of a passing nature. I don't want to eat tasty food every day. My usual meals are simple and plain.

Recently, listening to beautiful music has become a precious resting time for me. As for media, any of CD, phonograph records and videotapes is all right. At any rate, listening to music will heal my dried-up heart. Truthfully, however, a live performance has a greater impact on my mind. Fortunately, my secretaries include some women who learned piano playing at the musical college, so when I am exhausted due to accumulated stress, I call in these secretaries and ask them to play the piano for me. And such piano playing is very good. In particular, when my favourite melody, such as "Wings of Song," is played, my lachrymal glands loosen, shedding tears due to the beauty of the melody. This may be called "music therapy," and when I sip a cup of coffee, while listening to the beautiful sound of a piano, I become vigorous again, and strangely enough, I become willing to tackle work energetically.

Employees of my companies include a professional body massager, and in many cases, I receive his service. Probably because I damaged my neck muscles, whenever I become tired, the condition of my neck muscles deteriorates. At such a time, I call in him, and saying, "I'm sorry, but would you please massage my muscles around the neck?" I ask him to massage me. In this way, I receive his service for about an hour. He is good enough to massage such muscles, and then my feet, the soles of my feet, my waist, my back and palm -- thus, I receive massaging of my whole body. When the stiff portions of my body are massaged, I feel like I am in heaven, so to speak. How happy I would be if I could receive such massage service not only for an hour but perpetually. For me, however, happiness is a matter of momentary pleasure, so resolutely based on this thought, I get up vigorously, and grapple with work again.

In this way, I devise various arrangements to enjoy momentary happiness. They include angling, golf and music therapy. In particular, listening to the piano is wonderful. Only by listening to piano sound, I shed tears. It is really strange that, the instant I listen to a piano performance, my body and soul recover from tired conditions, as if the fatigue were erroneous. Probably, music has an immeasurable power.

Painting is also a powerful way to get rid of stress, for me. Even when I am exhausted and unable to do anything, I am cheered up if I forcibly hold a paintbrush and draw some picture. Because such a sentiment does not arise in the course of calligraphy, maybe the beauty of colours brings about such a mood.

In addition, ballet is effective to eliminate stress. I make a habit of dancing ballet regularly with the City Ballet Group, and ballet really makes one happy. Ballerinas with balanced bodies are really beautiful. They are living fairies, so to speak. It is exhilarating only to see them, but in addition I can dance with them -- this is a supreme form of happiness. I can make no expression other than "pleasant."

In contrast, Noh requires enormous concentration, and as such, far from eliminating stress, it increases stress. Even so, the stress may not be so serious if some level of technical level is reached. I first touched Noh when I was a university student, as explained in Chapter 1. Subsequently, I suspended its practice at age 28, but I resumed it after a blank period of about 20 years, at the age of 35 or 36.

To make up for the blank, I have concentrated myself on Noh lessons to a degree of abnormality for the past 15 years. Of course, I not only practiced it but also held announcement meetings designed for the "deadline effect." Usually, an announcement meeting is held twice a year. A professional Noh player holds one twice a year, on average. In my case, however, I hold an announcement meeting five times a year. In other words, I held such meetings at a pace of 2.5 times that of a professional Noh player. Of course, I maintain this pace even now. In addition, I hold these announcement meetings at first-class locations in the world, such as the Metropolitan Museum in the U.S., the United Nations in New York and Beijing University, so that the sense of tension is not commonplace. The "deadline effect" is also tremendous, and it seems to me that my techniques and internal enlightenment greatly enhance on each occasion of an announcement meeting.

In this way, I utilize arts and public entertainment of the East and the West as a kind of art therapy. At the same time, I dance personally, based on the understanding of traditional

cultures, and provide financial support, although only slightly. This has the aim of killing not two but four or five birds with one stone, which has always been my target. After all, unless the traditional culture itself becomes prosperous in addition to my feeling pleasure, I cannot be pleased from the bottom of my heart.

For me, as a business administrator, there are many problems, such as business fund management and the training of employees. In brief, I am always in a state of heavy stress, and I get rid of such stress by personally engaging in art therapy. The premise for this life pattern is a state of enlightenment, or rather I should call it a resignation that happiness is a momentary matter, or that it is nothing but a matter of momentary nature. It is all right to enjoy exultation and pleasure only for an instant, and I would like to attach greater importance to a sense of accomplishment and joy felt when some task is achieved. Elimination of stress is positioned only as a means to obtain such a sense of accomplishment, or to go on living energetically. It is true, however, that elimination of stress is an important factor for carrying through "firmness, sincerity and permanence."

Compatibility of Management and Art

Since becoming a business administrator at age 26, I have seen hell many, many times. Because of my difficulties in making monthly payments, I prostrated myself at various places, as I stated earlier. Whenever I felt an enormously miserable sentiment at such a time, I thought about when I would be free from this torment, and wished to become able to be annoyed with tax payments as soon as possible.

Of course, I could not afford to enjoy any art. The number of employees was few, and because such few employees were not yet mature, I continued to work from morning till night as the president of the business. Because I had to manage all of new customer cultivation, discount negotiations and money collection personally, there was no time to turn to arts, and I had to stop practicing Noh, which I had continued since my university days.

After passing through such rigorous days of hardship, management of the company was put on a sound track, when I was in the latter half of my 30s. Since the companies could maintain some financial resources, and also since employees became experienced, it became possible to leave on-site work to them. It was all right for me if I managed the overall course of the companies, and therefore I had time to spend freely. Of course, I personally examined important points, such as annual and monthly settlement of accounts, but it became all right if all other matters were left to handling by my subordinates, and it would have only negative effects on the rearing of employees, if I took care of all matters. Accordingly, I was able to have my own time 10 years after the corporate inauguration.

It was only after that, that I tackled calligraphy, painting, Noh, etc., in a really sincere manner.

People I meet often ask me, "How can you do such artistic activities while managing your companies?" but from my side, the tale is totally reverse. Because I manage companies, I can have time and financial resources to conduct such artistic activities. If I were not a business administrator of companies, and therefore there was no financial support for such activities, I could never engage in artistic activities to the current degree. I am able to conduct extensive artistic activities because I am a business administrator, and furthermore

because I am an owner business manager, not an employed president. If I were an employed president, I could never enjoy favourite arts during the desired time.

In addition, I am not a professional artist. It is not the case that I cannot live without singing songs or without selling pictures. I am not engaging in these artistic activities to earn my daily bread, so I can enjoy them as I like. In the case of painting, for instance, I can choose my favorite theme and favourite drawing materials, and draw pictures as I like. In brief, I can display my individuality without reserve. This is another reason I am able to carry through "firmness, sincerity and permanence."

In retrospect, it was really good for me to endure hardship in the 10 years after the start of my company. If I fled from the torment and grief of a business administrator, I could never enjoy arts as at present. Of course, I did not know such a wonderful world of arts. For human beings, endurance is important after all. If permanence in "firmness, sincerity and permanence" is carried through, a favourable development will surely occur some day. Believing this, I also intend to continue my efforts hereafter.

At the end of this Chapter, I would like to speak about motives for engaging in artistic activities, which is another factor in carrying through "firmness, sincerity and permanence." In my case, these motives are close to my philosophy. I generally believe that there are only three things that we human beings can carry to the other world after death. Posts, honour and assets cannot be carried to the other world. We cannot carry beloved family members, either. No matter how much we love these children, we cannot take them to the other world.

Then, what can we bring to the other world? The answer is three things: learning, art and religion.

First, regarding learning, it is possible to bring knowledge and the content of enlightenment obtained as a result of learning, and when we are reborn in the life after death, we can make them blossom as our academic talents. This is why there are children who are wise by nature and those who are not.

Second, arts can be brought to the other world, especially if they are polished, and they can be made to blossom as artistic talents when we are reborn. Artistic talents depend greatly on natural endowments. In my case, frankly speaking, I reached the level given positive evaluation by society only after I exerted threefold effort compared with others. It is an undeniable fact, however, that there are people who are endowed with god-given talents. What difference is there in such persons from others, and why are they endowed with heaven-blessed talents? The reason is that these people brought the artistic sense they polished in their previous world, to the current one.

Third, a religious mind can be brought to the other world. When the person concerned returns, he can live as a highly religious child, and can refine his mental state of enlightenment further.

This is the quality of a person. The quality is determined based on how the soul was refined in the previous life. Positions, or honour, or assets – or family and relatives – cannot be carried to the other world. What we can bring to the other world are learning, arts and a religious mind; namely, factors that were cultivated by our souls.

When we consider what the most fruitful life is, based on the aforementioned premise, the conclusion is automatically apparent. Namely, because there are only three things that we can bring to the other world and carry over there, all we can do is to thoroughly refine them in our limited period of time in this life. This must represent the most wonderful life in which we are happiest while we are living, and also after our death. This is my basic human life philosophy.

Therefore, I use all my energy to refine my academic ability, arts and religious mind while I am living in this world. A religious mind especially means enlightenment and virtue for dedication to society. This virtue can be brought to the other world, and if such virtue is accumulated, the person concerned can go to paradise. When he is reborn in the next life, he will be a lucky man.

If human life is reviewed in the long span, isn't it the ultimate happiness, after all, to be happy in this life, to be happier in the other world and to be by far more happier when we are reborn in the next life? At any rate, posts, honour and assets will vanish after a time, and I believe that, if so, it will meet the mind of god, and lead to the path to eternal happiness, if we refine our learning, arts and religion, and accumulate virtues, using posts, etc., and serve the purpose of enhancing human happiness, based on them.

Therefore, I don't want to lead a luxurious life. Nor do I want to live in a spacious house. Although having a home may be part of happiness, I remain a bachelor to carry through "firmness, sincerity and permanence." In other words, I lead a life like that of a Catholic priest, but I am like a Catholic priest, and at the same time I am an artist and a business administrator. On the other hand, my true face is that of an ordinary man, and I do not appear to be particularly pious. Because my religious base is Shinto, a polytheistic religion, I do not impose rigorous disciplines against this and that, like a monotheistic religion. Although my world is not loose, it is very generous.

Because I lead a life based on the aforementioned philosophy, no matter how much profit is recorded by my company, and no matter how many employees may join the staff, I will not be satisfied with it alone. Money will become nil in the future, and the company will perish. A thing having a shape will surely lose its shape some day. Also, anything that has a life will lose the life sooner or later. If so, it is better to refine shapeless, intangible treasures; namely, learning, arts and religion. These can be taken to the other world. All others: positions, honour, assets, relatives and friends, cannot be brought to the other world. What can be brought there is limited to learning, arts and religion.

This is why I continue study at universities even though I reach age 40 or 50. I am striving to refine my arts, to accumulate virtues and to deepen my enlightenment. The process for such efforts is a delight and happiness. Although I am happy now, I will be happier when I go to the other world. In addition, if persons have talent for learning and arts, and are lucky, they will have a next life protected by deities and Buddhas. If this idea is adopted, isn't it happiest to refine our learning, arts and religion? Confucius said, "While you do not know life, how can you know about death?"¹⁶⁰ If we know the world after death and the world in the next life well, and make sufficient preparations, we must be able to live now in the best possible way.

¹⁶⁰ *The Analects of Confucius*, Chapter 11, Verse 12.

CHAPTER FIVE:

MANAGEMENT AND ART

What Is Required of Business Administrators

Presumably because of the protracted recession, business failures of well-known enterprises have occurred one after another. Yamaichi Securities, Yaohan, Nippon Credit Bank, the Long-Term Credit Bank of Japan, Sogo and Mycal – all of these were distinguished companies that operated for scores of years. Among them, one company was even founded in the Edo period. Probably in view of the successive bankruptcies of these noted and distinguished companies, featuring long history and traditions, some clever man conceived an idea; namely, beginning at some unknown time, the new phrase “the life of companies” debuted, and with this as background, stories about the life span of companies became talked about plausibly in business magazines, etc. According to the theory, companies, which are like living things, have their own life spans, like human beings, and it is unavoidable for them to decline at some time in the future, even if they are currently in their prime, and they will surely become insolvent, when their lives come to their respective ends. It is like saying that business failure is the destiny of all enterprises, and that such a fate is unavoidable -- but this is no joking matter. In my opinion, the “life span of enterprises” is nothing but a playful expression of irresponsible critics, and business administrators who are given the helm of enterprises should not pay attention to such a story. There can be no life span for enterprises, and it is by no means because of the end of a corporate life span that old, famous enterprises become bankrupt one after another.

Then, why do companies become insolvent? The reason is simple. It is either because management skills are poor, or because business administrators are idle. There are no other reasons. If business administrators direct all of their abilities and attention to management of their companies, these companies cannot become insolvent so easily.

Abilities required of business administrators are of five kinds: abilities in sales management, financial management, labour management, fund procurement and tax countermeasures. I call them the “five pillars of management.” Their respective meanings, briefly, are as follows. Sales management refers to how to increase sales and secure profits. Financial management means ways of utilizing corporate funds effectively to contribute to smooth working fund operation. Labour management signifies measures to improve work environments, including wage/salary systems and personnel systems to create setups enabling the entire company to tackle business in concert. Fund procurement, in a nutshell, means skills in negotiating with banks, namely obtaining advantageous bank loans during a financial predicament. Finally, tax countermeasures are, needless to say, techniques to save on taxes, which can be termed considering ways to save on taxes within the scope of laws. If business administrators have acquired these five techniques, they are expected to somehow overcome business difficulties, even if some problems occur.

Now, of the “five pillars of management,” by far the most important is sales management. Certainly, some people may point out financial management or fund procurement as the most important ability. However, financial management or fund procurement, or even labour

management or tax countermeasures, is a matter to be implemented only after sales are increased and profits are secured, so it would be totally meaningless to talk about financial management or labour management, if no profits have been secured. If no profits can be gained, it is impossible to provide wages or salaries to employees, and to pay dividends to shareholders. In addition, there is no room for these companies to engage in "mecenat" activities, which are considered to represent social responsibility for enterprises.

Put straightforwardly, it is all right for enterprises if they are able to record profits and to continue to do so. If companies fail to make profits while forgetting this point and indulging in other matters, such as being addicted to "mecenat" activities, based on the notion that the primary responsibility of enterprises lies in welfare activities, overall management of the companies will suddenly deteriorate. Although I would not say that all business failure cases fall in this category, most bankruptcies must be cases of giving up business continuation due to declines of sales.

Then, what should be done to increase sales and to continue posting profits? Or, reversely speaking, why were bankrupt enterprises unable to secure sales enabling them to continue business by themselves? Many factors and elements are expected to come to the fore, if individual business failure cases are closely examined one after another. Some cases may be due to a shortage of eagerness on the part of salesmen, and some others may be because excellent customers were snatched away by competitors, or no hit products were developed. However, these are nothing but superficial causes, and based on my own contemplation, the ultimate reason must be only one: The companies concerned failed to adapt themselves to changes taking place in society. This is the largest reason for companies to fail to increase sales. If companies become unable to keep abreast of the changes in society, they will fail to maintain sales, and they will eventually go bankrupt.

Recently the term "CS (Customer Satisfaction)" has been frequently referred to in various circles. Everyone speaks of CF, and there are even companies that have upheld CF as their corporate slogan. Originally, however, corporate activities can be carried out only if there are customers, so CF, or the Customer First Principle, is a matter of course, if we consider it again. In other words, it would be meaningless even if the word CF is chanted a million times. The part and parcel of what should be learned is how to foresee and meet future needs of customers, and all attention must be concentrated on this point. This is because customer needs are continually changing, and if a company becomes unable to satisfy the constantly changing needs of customers, naturally the products and service of the company will not be accepted by customers. In other words, sales of the company will decline.

For this reason, business administrators must be sensitive to changes in society -- more than others. How are society and people's thinking changing? Unless business administrators can sensitively perceive these changes, they will lag behind other business managers, and their companies will eventually become bankrupt.

Of course, every company strives to prevent the occurrence of such a situation; that is, it works to deal with customer needs by conducting questionnaire surveys designed to catch market trends at an early date. Of course, such efforts are indispensable in today's corporate activities, and no corporate strategy can be valid without marketing. But when we consider if such efforts are sufficient, the answer is regrettably no. Marketing is carried out by all enterprises, and it may be considered impossible to progress ahead of others solely through

marketing. Furthermore, the reality is that incessantly changing customer needs cannot be adequately grasped only through analytical methods adopted to devise marketing. Then, what is necessary in addition to the analytical method?

Some people may think this an abrupt statement, but I consider intuition, or sensitivity, to be the most important ability and the greatest requirement for business administrators.

It is my firm view that, all the more because of this, business administrators must be men of business and at the same time artists, and in addition, they must have strong curiosity and non-prejudicial thinking, like that of children. Thus, business administrators and artists, who appear to be totally unconnected at a glance, are related to each other in the realms of intuition, sensitivity, or youthful thinking.

Adult Thinking Deprives a Man of the Brightness of Sensitivity

Small children continually repeat "What is that?" "What is this?" when they come across the unknown world. And they perseveringly keep asking why, and what are the reasons for things, when they are not satisfied with their parents' answers. They are considered to be the "mass of curiosity," so to speak. Children are also absorbed in matters of interest for as many hours as they like, and they do not stop such activities, no matter how strongly their parents tell them to. In this way, they are enthusiastic enough to be considered awful.

As they grow up, however, the adult mind gradually develops. The adult mind worries about shame or other people's views, considering that doing such and such might not be smart, or that asking a question might invite ridicule. Or, adults think of easily compromising with society, or giving up on plans instead of pursuing them, based on doubt about what result some action might have. Such adult thinking is called common sense, in other words. In fact, this common sense is a foxy matter. Everyone needs common sense to live as a member of society, but if someone's common sense is excessive, it will nip the bud of curiosity, making the person someone of dull sensitivity, unable to be moved or impressed by great paintings or music of the world. At the same time, it implants an excessive sense of utilitarianism in the person, who becomes too idle and follows an easy course in any matter. If this development occurs, it will be completely impossible for any man to catch and grip the incessantly changing minds of other people, and in addition, it is totally unthinkable for the person to produce ideas that may surprise society. Of course, such a person cannot perform tasks of a business administrator, which requires tenacity and guts. If such a person is at the helm of a company, it will immediately fail under the pressure of rough waves in the business world.

Soichiro Honda Did Not Lose the Mind of a Child

If successful business administrators are seen from this viewpoint, it is evident in everyone's eyes that they are men of strong individualistic character.

For instance, Mr. Soichiro Honda, the founder of Honda Motor Co., Ltd.¹⁶¹, left the following anecdote. When Honda Motor was not yet the major company it is today, the company

¹⁶¹ Japan's representative automobile/motorcycle manufacturer.

invited an important overseas customer to a Japanese-style restaurant in Kyoto. Of course, the host of the banquet was Mr. Honda himself.

At a high point of the banquet, when commercial exchanges were about to begin, the foreign customer went to toilet, as if he were trying to keep himself off such talks. However, the Japanese toilet at that time was not of a flush type but of the so-called "scoop type"¹⁶². Probably surprised at the difference, the overseas customer dropped his set of artificial teeth into the toilet. Hearing this, the employees of Honda Motor were excitedly at a loss as to what to do, and they were only making a racket. Then, Mr. Honda came to the scene, asking, "What's the matter?" Learning the situation, he took off his trousers, and wearing only a pair of trunks, he went into the large toilet pot, picking up the set of artificial teeth. Of course, the set of artificial teeth was smeared with filth, and the overseas customer was unlikely to put it into his mouth again. How should the set of artificial teeth be handled? Everyone was attentively watching the scene, and Mr. Honda washed the teeth out completely with running water, and to everyone's surprise, he put them into his own mouth. And after opening and closing his mouth several times, he handed the teeth over to the foreign customer, saying, "Now they are all right. They can be used perfectly."

It is not certain whether the foreigner put the set into his mouth again, and the subsequent development was not clear. At any rate, however, an ordinary person cannot take such an action by any means. And further, Mr. Honda was an owner of a "castle," so to speak, albeit his company was not so large at that time. If common sense were depended on, he might have made his secretary or other aides take care of the matter. But far from it -- he not only entered the large toilet pot in front of his hesitant subordinates, he also put the washed set of teeth into his own mouth. These series of actions were totally out of common sense. No -- this expression is not doing justice to Mr. Honda -- his actions should be regarded as "really naïve and honest."

To honour Mr. Honda properly, it should be added that he was not merely a man who surprised persons around him through such astounding actions as putting himself in the large toilet pot, only in trunks. He was one of the greatest inventors produced by Japan in its post-World War II history.

It is a well-known fact that, soon after the war, when resources and materials were in extreme shortage, Mr. Honda commercialized motorcycles, generally called "Batabata," thereby producing a great hit product. This motorcycle was produced on a very trifle occasion.

Soon after the end of the war, small-sized power generation-use engines, manufactured during the war for military purposes, became useless due to Japan's defeat in the war, and they were left unused. Thinking about these small-sized engines, Mr. Honda thought of buying them at low prices, attaching them to bicycles and selling engine-driven bicycles. But his relatives and acquaintances strongly objected to the idea, saying, "Now that fuel gasoline is not available, such engine-driven bicycles would be pearls before swine." Refuting such objection, Mr. Honda said, "All the more because gasoline is in shortage, vehicles requiring

¹⁶² The traditional Japanese-style toilet, before the spread of the flush toilet, in which human waste was stored in pots, and the waste was scooped out regularly.

little gasoline can be sold," thereby forcibly persuading those around him. Consequently, these engine-attached bicycles attained great success, as Mr. Honda predicted.

Subsequently, Mr. Honda produced motorcycles that could appeal to the world, based on the "Batabata," thereby developing Honda Motor as a representative motorcycle manufacturer in Japan. Even after he became the business administrator of a major company, he continued to try to personally improve motorcycles, wearing overalls and grasping cutting pliers, and he hardly sat in his chair in the president's office. He was reportedly happiest when he was soiled with grease together with young engineers. Previously, it had been the prevailing image of the business administrator of a big enterprise, based on common sense, to sit comfortably on a large chair in his office, but he remarkably destroyed such "common sense." What should be remembered in this connection is one of his impressive remarks: "A really creative person may be scatterbrained, because he must break the framework of common sense."

Following the development of CVCC, the low-pollution engine new to the world, Honda Motor subsequently developed into an automobile maker unique in the world. It is strongly doubted, however, that the company could have succeeded in developing to that stature had it not been led by such a boy-like business administrator as Soichiro Honda.

Isn't it right to assume that Mr. Honda was trying to break the shell that contained him by destroying the framework called common sense? Of course, he must have seen, beyond that, an image of himself as having unlimited possibilities.

Challenges by Richard Branson

In the world, we can find many other business administrators who, like Mr. Soichiro Honda, continue to challenge something to destroy their own shells. Mr. Richard Branson¹⁶³, leader of the Virgin Group, may be cited as representative of such business managers.

I met with Mr. Branson once in Britain. He, who is one year older than I, was a frank, open-hearted person, as rumoured, and I was impressed to see him wearing the same sweater I had seen on him in a magazine picture.

Mr. Richard Branson, who was born in the U.K. in 1950, left senior high school midway, at age 17. We heard that, after he was called a nuisance by a senior high school teacher, he was given a prophecy by the teacher: "I think you will either go to a jail, or become a billionaire." The next year, he inaugurated "Student," an opinion magazine for students. He subsequently succeeded in having interviews with Mick Jagger and John Lennon. At age 20, he established a company for DM sales of recordings, and founded Virgin Records three years later. Then, he succeeded in developing the company into one of the leading recordings company in the world, seemingly overnight. He not only supported the Rolling Stones, the Sex Pistols and Janet Jackson, he also introduced Culture Club, Phil Collins and Peter Gabriel successively to the world, growing them into world-class stars. And in 1984, at age 34, he entered a totally different field. He established Virgin Atlantic Airways, and grew it into the 2nd largest airline in the U.K.

¹⁶³ Branson, Richard, *Losing my virginity*, TBS Britannica, 1998

Thereafter, he expanded his activities into various fields. Accordingly, including Virgin Rail, Virgin Cola and Virgin Mega Store, Virgin Group companies in the realms of fashion, cosmetics, publishing, banks, insurance, communications and broadcasting stations, in scores of countries in the world, now exceed 100 companies.

So, what was the key motive for Mr. Branson, who had already succeeded in the music industry, to suddenly start up Virgin Atlantic Airways, which is in a totally different business sector? At that time, the British airline industry was almost in a monopolistic condition, so it was not an industry easy to advance into by a completely new entrant. In fact, while much cost was needed to manage Virgin Atlantic, British Airways, the largest airline in the U.K., started malicious competition against Virgin Atlantic, aiming to eliminate Branson, the new entrant. As a result, banks threatened to withdraw loans made to Branson, and to avoid bankruptcy of Virgin Atlantic Airways, he was forced to sell Virgin Records, which he worked so energetically to develop. He was reportedly travelling through towns, while shedding tears, soon afterward. "Not only pleasant developments but also hard ones occurred.... It was truly a difficult task to establish companies without funds." This was one of his statements, and his toil is understandable to me, as a person who had similar experiences.

At any rate, Mr. Branson talked about the motive for starting the new business in a certain interview: "I will tell you about the occasion of the start of Virgin Atlantic. Because I had had an unpleasant experience while on an airline flight, I thought I could provide better service. I came up with the idea on a Friday, and made up my mind that next Monday."

"At that time, existing airlines were not providing service that matched their charges. Therefore, I thought we would be able to stop the state of monopoly by providing service commensurate with the cost. For me, the word 'Virgin' has the same meaning as 'Challenging spirit.'"

To the interviewer's question if it is pleasant to challenge major companies, Mr. Branson gave the following clear answer: "Of course it's pleasant, because it is also conducive to the interest of consumers. In the case of banks and cola, prices will be unduly raised, if there is no competition. I would like to establish small companies and compete with major enterprises, thereby awakening the eyes of big enterprise operators."

"The first half of my life, up to now, has been pleasing to me, as it was full of challenges," he continued. "Although there occurred events hard to take care of, I am satisfied."

Mr. Branson, the leader of a world-class conglomerate, who made the aforementioned statements, has a totally different face, so to speak. He is an adventurer who challenges crossing the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans aboard hot-air balloons, and crossing the Atlantic Ocean on a motorboat.

When he accomplished crossing the Pacific Ocean, he left Miyazaki in Japan for the other side of the Pacific coast. On the way, he accidentally dropped a spare gas cylinder, and he was almost carried to the Southern Hemisphere at the branch spot of jet air streams, but eventually he successfully arrived in Canada. In 1988, he once challenged a non-stop balloon flight around the world, but unfavourable weather forced him to give up this first attempt. At his second challenge in December 1997, the rope mooring of the balloon was cut off on the morning of the departure date, and the unmanned balloon flew away on its own.

Mr. Branson repaired the recovered balloon, and tried to challenge a round-the-world balloon trip, but he again abandoned his attempt because he failed to get into a jet stream. He was age 47 at that time.

Although he had an experience of nearly dying, he seems to have no intention of abandoning his plan.

He said, "I have been frequently asked why I challenge renewing previous records by motorboat or hot-air balloon. Many people point out that, now that I have gained success, money and a happy home, I should stop exposing myself and people around me to danger, and enjoy myself with what I fortunately have at present. Their arguments are certainly right, and I really agree with them in some parts of myself. However, other parts of myself drove me to new adventures, inducing me to seek challenging my limits."

As a business administrator, Mr. Branson started up many business ventures in the capacity of an entrepreneur, and he launched enterprises almost from scratch, thereby attaining success. This entrepreneurship and his enthusiasm for adventure aboard hot-air balloons are probably on the same line. Mr. Branson is a challenger before he is a businessman. He challenges adventure, and continues to challenge new adventure after overcoming danger. At age 49, and even 50, he has not abandoned his dream of a round-the-world hot-air balloon flight.

Even so, his unceasing challenges have become topical, and they have effects of not only drawing world attention to the Virgin Group but also encouraging all employees of Virgin Group companies with the knowledge that their president is challenging such difficulties – namely hard-to-attain, almost impossible, or dangerous adventures.

The situation is totally the same in the case of Soichiro Honda. He worked as the leader at the workshop and continued his labour, smeared with grease, even when Honda Motor, which he personally started up, became a world-scale enterprise. It was so famous that young engineers who were encouraged by such a figure of their boss were roused into new actions, based on the view "We must exert ourselves"; as a result, they tackled the task of developing a low pollution-level engine that cleared the rigorous standard set by the U.S. Muskee Law, and they finally succeeded in developing the CVCC engine, which attained such an objective for the first time in the world.

In other words, enterprises are safe and sound, if top management maintains a fresh mind like that of a child, and retains the posture of destroying the wall of common sense and the mental wall of limited thinking that seeks ease and avoids anything laborious.

Japanese Challengers

However, human beings are prone to lose their youthful thinking and become unwilling to challenge anything dangerous or unknown, when they get old. Their sentiment that the conventional things are all right, that it is OK to follow the past norms or common sense and that risks should be avoided, grows stronger, and their willingness or spirit to challenge any new plans wanes. I call this state "senile thinking." If a business administrator falls into this status, his enterprise will be in danger. Even if he has mastered the five management techniques introduced at the beginning of this chapter; namely, sales management, financial

management, labour management, fund procurement and tax countermeasures, his enterprise will be really precarious.

Of course, I do not think there is a "life span for companies," but if there really is one, it must be the life span of management's thinking. To prolong such thinking, there is no other way but to make yourself someone that will continually challenge something. Mr. Branson must be conscious of this as he keeps challenging balloon flights despite danger, and even though he is 50. It can be said that it was because he had such an unyielding spirit that, despite some failures, he was able to continue his challenges from Virgin Records, to Virgin Atlantic Airways, to Virgin Rail, to Virgin Mega Store and to Virgin Cola, one after another – although I guess Virgin Cola has not been so successful.

In Japanese business circles, there have been not a few people that maintained efforts to challenge dangerous or difficult tasks while becoming old. The late Mr. Akio Morita¹⁶⁴, the founder of Sony Corp., was one representative of such businessmen.

Based on the view that business administrators become weak first in their limbs, Mr. Morita started playing tennis when he was 50 years old, he began skiing at 60 and he slid down the giant slalom course of a Canadian skiing ground, as a demonstrator, at around age 65, thereby receiving great applause from many spectators. And Mr. Morita developed a venture enterprise, which he started from scratch, into Sony of the world, based on his conviction that "anything can be attained, if dared to be attempted."

Mr. Norio Ohga¹⁶⁵, Mr. Morita's successor, had a very rare business background, as he was a former baritone, who graduated from the musical department of Tokyo Geijutsu Daigaku, and he was a leading person who achieved the spread of compact disks. While cutting a prominent figure in business circles, he also conducted a symphony orchestra. He also had a pilot's license, and travelled throughout the world flying his own jet airplane.

Including Mr. Nobuyuki Izui, who succeeded Mr. Ohga, business administrators of Sony have had a spirit to continually challenge impossible things, or dangerous or troublesome things, so that the company called Sony has been able to overcome danger and open new fields that spearheaded the times. The company led the world in play stations, and it has recently developed a robot called AIBO. Thus, it has been attaining unprecedented feats one after another without being particular about genres.

Mr. Keizo Saji¹⁶⁶, the late business administrator of Suntory¹⁶⁷, was not the founder of his company, but he was a man who drastically expanded the business inaugurated by his

¹⁶⁴ Takemura, Kenichi, *The Remark by Akio Morita, Chairman of Sony: Make Yourself Larger and More Useful!* Mikasa Shobo, 1991.

Kuroki, Yasuo & Nomura, Masaki, *Akio Morita and Keizo Saji – What Are Their Terrific Points?* Sansui-sha, 2000.

¹⁶⁵ Oga, Norio & Son, Masayoshi, *Victory of Sensibility*, Keizaikai, 1996.

Arisawa, Soji, *Endless Tradition: The World of Norio Oga of Sony*, Bungei Shunju, 1999.

Sony Magazine's Business Book Editorial Bureau, *Record of Norio Oga's Words – Foreseeing Business Manager, Who Cultivates the Times*, Sony Magazines, 1998.

¹⁶⁶ Saji, Keizo, *Henkotsu Nankotsu*, Nihon Keizai Shimbun-sha, 2000. Katayama, Osamu, "How Interesting! Keizo Saji and Suntory Culture," Home-sha, 2000.

father, and succeeded in establishing whiskey in Japan. And he was known to hold a singing concert for Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, involving participation by 10,000 people, at Osaka Castle, every year, and he personally took part in the event, after studying German songs. He was also an artist, who opened private painting exhibitions.

Mr. Isao Okawa¹⁶⁸ in CSK, the predecessor of Sega Enterprises¹⁶⁹, is a business manager that surprised society. He has great courage, as he acquired Sega, with annual sales of 20 billion yen, when sales of CSK were only about 10 billion yen. Recently, he established the Okawa Center for Future Children, at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), at the expense of \$27 million. This institute is scheduled to be completed in 2003, and it was much talked about, as the contribution amount was the largest in the 137-year history of MIT, and it was of the greatest in scale for a donation by a Japanese individual to an overseas organization. Further, he reportedly presented individual employees of his business, amounting to tens of thousands in all, with personal computers, spending his own money. On the other hand, he acquired skills of old-Japanese-style dancing, and he demonstrated new dancing performance on stage, to which he invited business partners and customers. As such, he has an aspect of a man of culture.

Records of his statements include the following: "Sega, and eventually the CSK Group, will continue to challenge projects that will surprise the sensitivity of people, making them say 'Wow!' The reason is the DNA of Isao Okawa." This statement is considered to show the very essence of the venture enterprise spirit."

The persons mentioned here are only a few examples of representative Japanese businessmen who retained their challenging spirit. In Japan, and also in the world, there must be innumerable business managers who are continually challenging difficult tasks to break common sense and their own shells. Corporate management is not activities that can be implemented by anyone who is simply good at managing techniques. If the ardour to find a new 'self' by continuing to challenge difficulties without compromising one's own eagerness to be at ease, is lost, and if "senile thinking" begins, it will no longer be possible to maintain and develop the enterprise concerned. I am confident that it is no exaggeration to make this assertion.

Reasons I Am Engaged in Artistic Activities

Although lagging far behind the aforementioned senior businessmen, I manage scores of enterprises inside and outside Japan, as a venture entrepreneur. Mr. Richard Branson is challenging hot-air balloons, but I am scared to death of high places. Although this is not the real reason, I have been challenging stage art.

No matter what happens, I'm not likely to die by falling from a stage. So I am safe, but it requires much courage to stand on a stage in front of thousands of spectators. Furthermore, to keep challenging in a forward-looking manner, I make a point of co-performing with leading artists of the times, as much as possible. For a venture entrepreneur, status quo

¹⁶⁷ Japan's top western liquor manufacturer.

¹⁶⁸ Okawa, Isao, *Previous Notice -Opening the Information Century*, Toyo Keizai Shimposha, 1996.

¹⁶⁹ A game software maker in Japan.

would mean a decline. Also to overcome the sentiment of loathing doing laborious tasks, I make a point of encouraging myself and continually challenging tasks that are impossible, that require much energy and that are extremely difficult.

I started learning to sing when I was 40 years old, I began studying music theories at age 44, and sat for examination at a music college at 45. Because the school management wished to give chances to study music to younger applicants, regrettably I was not admitted to the college, but for the next year, I challenged a variety of vocal competitions. And at age 46, I gained entry into the master class of Musashino Academia Musicae, which only accepts persons at the level of graduates from music colleges, overcoming the competition rate of more than 2 times..

When I was 42 years old, moreover, I started learning classical ballet, and I created, directed and personally performed new stage art, such as "creative ballet" and "opera ballet." Several months after receiving full-scale ballet lessons to see how widely I could open my legs, I invited Ms. Maya Plisetskaya, the greatest prima ballerina in the 20th century, and performed ballet dances on stage jointly with her. Because of this, I received many comments from acquaintances that I have an extremely stout heart. At any rate, however, the greater the co-performer may be, the more notable I myself will become. In addition, it is possible to learn, from super-excellent persons, not only techniques but also excellent spirit, which should be called philosophy. Furthermore, my exercise must naturally become more eager and more sincere to make myself match such super-excellent persons. These are reasons why I make a point of performing jointly with first-rate artists.

And, two years ago, when I was 48, I started learning Peking Opera. I began learning techniques of Peking Opera from a top-class performer in that field in Beijing. Peking Opera actors generally attend classes at a Peking Opera school beginning at about age 10, but in my case, I started from scratch at age 48. In the following year, I performed in a full-scale Peking Opera play, although it was a short one. This seemed to be an epoch-making event from the viewpoint of common sense regarding Peking Opera.

I started learning Noh drama techniques while a university student, but I did not practice Noh performance for 10 years after my university graduation, partly because I was busy with my business. After a blank period of many years, however, I resumed Noh exercise several years ago, and subsequently concentrated much effort on Noh plays. In 1996, when I was 45 years old, I performed as the protagonist in my first Noh performance of "Shoujou" (Pongo), and including this Noh drama, I have played the leading role in 18 Noh dramas in the past four years. In the Noh school of Hosho-ryu, to which I belong, a professional Noh performer plays the role of protagonist twice a year, on average. Because I played such a role at the pace of 5 times a year, I did so at a rate 2.5 times that of a professional Noh player, based on simple calculation. In addition, it is common for an amateur Noh player to perform such a role only once, or not at all, in his whole life. More than that, in my case, I performed on many famous stages overseas, such as the Large Hall of the Metropolitan Museum in New York, and also at the United Nations Plaza in New York, with about 40 ambassadors and consuls in attendance. In Japan, I staged a free Noh performance at the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Plaza, in front of about 4,000 spectators. I also held free-admission charity Noh performances in the National Noh Theatre and the Hosho Noh Theatre, enabling general people to see Noh plays without cost.

Another characteristic of Noh events I have held is that I always perform with the headmaster of the Hosho school. The headmaster's willing acceptance of my request for co-performance at any such occasion, means he recognizes my technical ability as being high enough so that his joint performance with me will not be unacceptable for the headmaster of a major Noh school. In particular, I played the part of protagonist in "Ishibashi" (Stone Bridge), in Japan and abroad, several times, and this is one of the three most important performance items for the Hosho school, such that it cannot be performed unless it is approved by the headmaster of the school.

According to the evaluation of a certain professional Noh player, my real Noh ability is only slightly inferior to that of middle-class professional Noh players. Considering that professional Noh players are usually sons of professional players, and that they continue Noh practices and participate in formal Noh dramas from childhood, it must be an unusual and difficult event for a man like me to perform at a pace 2.5 times that of a professional Noh player, after passing age 40, although I had learned Noh techniques while a university student. However, I think it is worth doing, all the more because it is difficult.

The tension for each staging of Noh drama is enormous. Besides, I am not leading a life that contacts Noh every day, as in the case of professional Noh players. I exercise Noh techniques, by finding short time out of my busy schedule occupied with travelling throughout the world, because of my business. In addition, Noh requires dancing with a mask on, such that the field of view on the stage is extremely narrow, which further heightens tension. Nonetheless, I think it is because I raise my spirit so as to endure such a high level of tension and concentration, that I can operate more than 10 companies, and successfully at that.

So far, I have challenged a variety of major, nerve-requiring stages, including performances with scores of topflight artists at the Royal Albert Hall or Carnegie Hall, and they were nothing but challenges to myself, so to speak, designed to challenge tasks impossible, difficult and perilous, and to eliminate the idle mind to avoid laborious work. In this sense, I think I am seeking the same concept as that of challengers of hot-air balloon flights, like Mr. Branson, whose age is only one year different from mine.

Thus, I find something similar to mine in the sentiment of Mr. Branson, who shares my generation. But my creation and personal performance of new stage art, at such a short schedule as considered to be too rash, are aimed at preventing me from losing the aforementioned spirit of finding delight in challenging tasks laborious and difficult – a spirit essential for venture entrepreneurs. The reason is not only this, but it is true to say that this is one of the major motives for my actions.

CHAPTER SIX:

CONCLUSION

Art Can Be Started at Any Age

As the conclusion of this article, I would like to point out, first, that art can be started at any age.

With regard to art, there is a tendency to consider that it is important to begin learning it in childhood, and that it is too late to start it after growing up to adulthood. In the case of piano or violin, it is even argued, in the most plausible manner, that it is too late to start it even at the age of six or seven. This is a mere obsessed idea or self-imagined concept. If a person really intends to start piano, that person can do so at any age, and all of violin, singing, calligraphy and painting can be commenced at any age. Apart from arts that involve violent movements, such as ballet and Peking Opera, all other arts have nothing to do with the age at which they are begun.

In the world of pianists, for example, it seems to be contended that it is impossible to become a first-class pianist unless it is started during childhood -- at the age of three or four. Certainly, it may be better to start it at such an age, in order to become a first-rate pianist or a world-class one, and it may be true that otherwise the person cannot really become a first-class pianist. Even so, how many people are there on earth, who began lessons during childhood and who eventually became first-rate pianists? Apart from being first-rate, how many persons are there working as professional pianists? As to Japanese pianists, Hiroko Nakamura is famous, but when we consider how many pianists have been successful as independent professionals, we can probably think of less than five persons. Maybe, such persons are one out of hundreds of thousands of people, or one out of millions.

It is a reality that, even if piano lessons are first taken in childhood, most of such learners stop piano practice after a time. Most of them discontinue learning piano techniques when they start to study for senior high tests, or when they begin university entrance preparation. Probably, about 90% of these people stop piano practice around such timing. Only a handful of people overcome such difficulties, going to a music college to continue their piano lessons, but after graduation from music college, most of them become music teachers at schools. In this way, even after receiving lessons from teachers since childhood, most of such people cannot become professional performers, and they teach music to students at schools. In addition, not a few people still retain a sense of frustration that, although "I wanted to become a professional pianist, I could not become one after all." Only a few can perform their music brilliantly at flamboyant stages casting sceptical gazes at the aforementioned group of losers. It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a piano player to become an independent, professional performer in Japan.

If such a state is considered, if any person is to become a first-class professional pianist, it is absolutely essential to receive thorough lessons from his/her childhood, and to possess almost unrivalled talent. Nevertheless, it is not right to assume that no one can grasp the essence of piano art unless the person concerned is to become a first-class pianist. In addition, it cannot be true that only classic piano performance is piano art.

As against classic piano art, there are such areas as jazz piano art and popular piano art. Jazz/popular piano music can be played relatively easily, if chord theory, which corresponds to harmonics in classic piano music, is mastered. It is wrong to say that jazz/popular piano music cannot be played superbly unless it is started during the infant age of three or four, as in the case of classic piano music. So, it is the field of popular piano and jazz piano that can be started at any age, and in fact, there are not a few people who began piano playing after they grew up, and who became professional performers.

In my company, there is an employee named Yuichi Sakamoto. Before joining one of my companies, he was active as a professional popular pianist. He started receiving full-scale lessons only after graduating from senior high school, and he became a professional popular artist only several years after that. Accordingly, it is not too late, no matter when training may be started, with regard to popular piano or jazz piano music.

A man greater than Sakamoto is Mr. Yawata, from whom I took piano lessons. Being a graduate of the Foreign Language Department of Sophia University, he had never touched a piano before he entered the university. When he first did so, after entering the university, however, the sounds issued were so beautiful that he was greatly moved. He then undertook piano practice, and surprisingly enough, he started activities as a professional pianist as soon as his graduation from the university. Probably he easily grasped music theory, as he has very clear thinking, but it was miraculous for him to become a professional only after practicing music for four years while attending a university.

It was, in fact, because I heard his story about starting music that I began to study piano. I thought that, if he could do that, it must also be possible for me to do it, and in addition, I was not aiming to become a professional; it would be sufficient for me to be able to play the piano. "However, wait a moment," I thought. "He started piano practice at age 18, but I am now 35." So, thinking that the difference between age 18 and 35 may be greater than considered in the mental aspect, I asked, "I am now 35. Can someone start at such an age?" To this question, Mr. Yawata replied, nonchalantly, "Of course, it is possible. You can start it at any age, if you have willingness to do it." Because I was compliant almost to the degree of being abnormal, I thought, upon hearing his answer, "Oh, it is possible, and if so, I will begin soon," and I started taking piano lessons.

Of course, the beginning was extremely hard, as my fingers did not move. For me, at that time, it was almost tantamount to a miracle to move the fingers of my right and left hands separately. Frankly speaking, I was worried if I could really become able to move them separately in the future, but I am not a type to be discouraged by such concern. Telling myself that this is the same as insect-taking or fishing in the past, and that I will be able to do it without fail, if I exercise it thoroughly, I put in much effort. At first, I practiced for an average of 13 hours per day, and I sat at the piano for up to 18 hours. The teacher taught me for one hour per day. So, other than that hour, I exercised for an average of 13 hours a day alone. It seems no one practices for such a long time. In my case, however, it has been characteristic of me since my childhood, to not feel satisfaction unless I do something to the last, once I have started it. Eventually, I acquired the technique, in the case of calligraphy and painting, and piano was no exception. It was not hard for me to play the piano for 13 hours consecutively in a single day. At any rate, I intended to continue practicing until I became able to play the piano. And I cannot forget the great emotion I felt when I could move my right and left hands separately. The sense of accomplishment felt, when one feat is

achieved, in the field of fishing, or calligraphy, or piano, strengthens the person concerned further.

Anyway, piano art includes popular piano and jazz piano categories, in addition to classic piano art, and there are not a few people who are playing active roles as popular piano or jazz piano professionals. Among them are those who became professionals after starting from scratch, like Mr. Sakamoto or Mr. Yawata, or those who learned classic piano technique for some time when they were children and moved to the field of pops after a while. This is possible because popular piano music can be somehow played, if chord theory is mastered, so it is by no means too late to start that category of music at over age 30, as in my case. In terms of technique, however, later starters like me are inferior to those who have received lessons since childhood. Even if I practice for a total of 13 hours, or up to 18 hours per day, it is difficult to catch up with early starters, because the absolute exercise volume is different. Not particularly because of this, I shifted my focus to impromptu playing, as soon as I reached the stage of being able to move my fingers almost as desired. One reason was that I was endowed with rich inspiration, and I felt that I was more suited to composing music tunes. In the case of impromptu playing, music is composed and played based on inspiration at the time, so it is regrettable that I cannot repeat the same playing twice, but even so, it is possible to enjoy playing the piano sufficiently.

As for the violin, the starting age is also of no significance. This is a story heard from my first violin instructor: His violin instructor never touched a violin until age 17. Previously he had certainly been interested in music, but he had never picked up a violin, and subsequently he frantically tackled violin lessons. Considering that, only in the case of the violin, poor players would cause trouble to others, if they play the violin at places near others, he went to a riverside or on a hill to practice playing, according to my instructor. As a result of such vigorous practice every day, surprisingly enough, he became a concert master -- although that of his university orchestra -- two years later, when he was only 19 years old. Really, it was significant for him to almost master the violin in only two years.

The surprising fact about him was not limited to that. At the age of 21, when he graduated from the university, he was tired of classic music, and he became a studio musician, and at age 27, he issued his own CD. More than that; he was reputed to be much better at teaching how to play music than authoritative professors, so music college students, who aimed to master classic violin techniques but were unable to attain their purposes, came to him one after another, to learn such techniques. In fact, my violin instructor was one of such troubled students, and according to him, his teacher was extremely skilled in teaching how to play the violin. Although the teacher did not receive lessons from his childhood, and he started violin music only at age 17, his ability as a studio musician was almost incomparable, while his teaching method of classic violin techniques was superb. Everyone seemed to wonder why, but, Isn't it because he started later, and therefore, he could grasp the points of learning violin technique clearly?

There is another violinist who rose to the first-class level although he started late as a musician. He is a graduate of Tokyo University, where the brightest students gather from all over the country, and he too, did not touch a violin until he joined the university. Soon after entering the university, he picked up a violin for the first time, and for reasons unknown, he immediately joined the Tokyo University orchestra. Subsequently, he practiced playing the violin, and issued squeaking sound jointly with the superior staff every day. As a result, he

became a regular member of the orchestra in two years. Although this alone is surprising enough, it is too early to marvel at that. When he graduated from the university, he challenged auditioning for the NHK Symphony Orchestra, which has the highest level among all orchestras in Japan, and surprisingly again, he succeeded in entering the NHK Symphony Orchestra, with the top achievements among all competitors. In other words, he passed the audition at the top of all competitors only four years after he started learning the violin.

Hearing that story, the mother of a viola player belonging to another orchestra, who is one of my acquaintances, reportedly said, "What a minimum-cost-requiring, dutiful son he is!" The viola player, her son, graduated from a state-run music college and entered a certain orchestra, and it seemed that a total of about 100 million had been required up to then, what with lesson charges since his childhood, tuition fees for the state college, and viola cost amounting to 50 or 60 million. Compared with him, his mother could not help saying, "How little money was required!"

Three persons reportedly passed the audition of the NHK Symphony Orchestra, and the violinist led the others greatly. Of course, he must have received suitable lessons, but he spent no money until he joined Tokyo University. Hearing that, I again asked, "Is it possible for me, too?"

And the viola player answered, "Because it was possible for that person, you may be able to do it."

As such, I challenged violin techniques, based on my characteristically compliant mind. In the case of the violin, I exercised for 13 hours a day until appropriate sounds could be issued. Until then, I issued "creaking sound" every day, probably troubling others, and subsequently, after continuing exercise without becoming discouraged, I was somehow able to issue acceptable sounds. In July 1994, I and Mr. Rainer Honeck, the concert master of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, held a joint violin concert, thereby presumably attaining something. It was true that I never had ability to compete with Mr. Honeck, so he played difficult portions while I did easy portions. Even so, I could enjoy myself greatly by holding a joint concert together with a first-class performer in the world.

Partly because I have been playing the violin, I have become somewhat hard of hearing, so I intend to shift to the cello. The cello is also a musical instrument that can be handled after we become old. Because the movement is less than that of violin playing, cello playing appears to be less difficult, but the conclusion of only this matter is too early, until it is actually undertaken.

At any rate, in the case of the violin, there is such a person who entered the university orchestra at age 17 for the first time, and eventually issued a CD as a studio musician, and there is another person, who touched a violin for the first time after entering Tokyo University, and who passed the audition of the NHK Symphony Orchestra at the top of applicants, after practicing for only four years. Knowing this, it cannot be absolutely right to say that, in the case of the violin, no one can reach a substantial level unless he or she starts violin lessons during childhood. Of course, the receipt of advanced education from childhood may be necessary to become famous as a soloist violin player. Nonetheless, considering that there is a person who, after starting violin exercise at the age of 17 or 18, eventually passed the entrance examination of Japan's No. 1 orchestra, and that, as a simple hobby for

the purpose of holding a personal concert, at best, it is by no means too late no matter what age its exercise may be started.

Therefore, the view that it is necessary to start receiving lessons in childhood to become good at the violin or the piano is nothing but an obsessed idea or a self-imagined concept. Of course, it is better if someone can start studying in his or her childhood. However, there are many people who, although starting lessons while they are very young, stop practicing after a time. Most people say, "I learned how to play the piano or the violin when I was young, but I no longer play." If so, isn't it better to start learning at middle age, and to continue practice until one dies? Namely, it is better to play a wonderful performance and then breathe one's last, or to present a splendid piano or violin performance, and, while saying, "Then, everyone, good-bye," to leave this world – in other words to continue piano or violin performance until one's death, without throwing it away. Because more than 90% of people stop learning the piano or violin, even if they start receiving lessons in their childhood, it is believed more respectable for someone to start receiving lessons at his or her middle age, and to continue practice until his or her death -- this is my thinking and conclusion regarding arts.

Excuse me for repeating myself, but learning something can be started at any age. It is never too late to start at an old age. For instance, a doctor of engineering representing Japan, named Hideo Itokawa, started cello playing at age 50, holding a cello concert, and this is a good example. Since he began it at 50, it appeared that he experienced hardship, as was expected, and according to hearsay, Dr. Itokawa did not exercise the playing of a whole tune. Instead, he progressed slowly, by separating a tune into four bars, and learned one bar only after one bar was completely mastered.

Dr. Itokawa was also known to challenge ballet after age 50. Truthfully speaking, I started learning ballet eight years ago, because I heard Dr. Itokawa had done it. Thinking that "if there is a person who began receiving ballet lessons at over age 50, I must be able to do so at age 42, so I will start it," and this challenging spirit drove me to take ballet lessons from an instructor.

Thus, there are many cases of challenging artistic activities during old age, so there are no artistic activities that cannot be done, if there is a will to do them. If someone considers it impossible to do them, it is because that person lacks knowledge and information. Many people would listen to the views that the piano or violin cannot be mastered unless lessons to learn it are started in childhood, and they would not like to listen to the opinions of persons who challenge artistic activities when they are old. That's why most people give up the thought of learning something when they become elderly. But if so, these persons' talents are left unused, and the aging of their spirit is accelerated. With regard to piano, there are classic piano and popular piano fields, and the realm of popular piano art can be started at any age, and there are many cases in which someone started learning it at an old age. Furthermore, if the purpose is not to become a soloist or piano teacher, but to enjoy playing the piano or violin as a hobby, or to sometimes present a performance at a concert, then anyone can start learning it at any age.

Spirit of Japanese People to Continue Lifelong Study

As a matter of fact, office workers who are starting to take piano lessons in their 30s and 40s are increasing in Japan. Furthermore, not a few people seem to be challenging the violin and the guitar. If music scores cannot be read, it will be all right simply to convert scores into C major, so those in C major have been marketed in recent years. Accordingly, middle-aged or elderly people who will start piano or violin are expected to increase further hereafter. One reason for this prediction is the concept of lifelong education, which is being spread considerably in Japan. People who have retired from enterprises after reaching retirement age appear to be positively participating in various circles, to seek targets for their life, and they appear to be enjoying their remaining life.

Another reason is that, without the need to bring in the new concept of lifelong education, Japanese people are a race that has been fond of learning since ancient times. Although it may be difficult for the Japanese people to determine their own characteristics, foreign people say that no other race likes to study as much as Japanese people. One foreigner who pointed this out is Professor Ezra F. Vogel, of Harvard University, who said, in his book "Japan as Number One"¹⁷⁰, to the following effect: "Why has Japan become world No. 1? [Of course, this was the story in the 1980s, and now, being bogged down, Japan is far from being number one.] The reason is that Japanese people find pleasure in studying. They continue to maintain some hobbies even when they get old, and they keep learning tea ceremony, flower arrangement and other arts until they die. All the more because they have a nature to find pleasure in learning something, they absorb new phenomena and new technologies one after another, and not only that, they digest and turn them into totally different things. This national characteristic is the reason they became No. 1." This is the conclusion of "Japan as Number One," written by Ezra Vogel.

It seems really certain that the Japanese people like to study and to learn the method of something. For instance, there has been the expression "learning the method at age 60" since olden times, and the expression itself is proof that there have been many people who learn tea ceremony, or flower arrangement, or calligraphy, or painting, after they pass age 60. Of course, there have been not a few people who hope to travel the world jointly with their wives, or to live at ease in calm suburbs, or to reside as they wish, after the working age limit of 60, and these are also fine ways to spend remaining life. However, aren't there as many people of the lifelong study school, who hope to continue learning or studying something until they die, as those who would like to live freely? This being the case, the Japanese people are originally a race particularly fond of studying or learning methods.

Do you know the flamenco dancer Yoko Hagiwara? She is the daughter of Sakutarō Hagiwara, a noted writer, and until the age of 37, she had been nothing but a commonplace housewife, who liked knitting and sewing. Unlike her father, she had not written anything as a writer or wished to. However, at a certain time, she was told by someone, "Since you are the daughter of Sakutarō Hagiwara, write a novel like your father," and when she started to write novels as recommended, she improved as a writer in a very short period of time. And without losing time, she won a literary prize. So, although she had never written anything until age 37, she was awarded a literary prize in an instant, so to speak.

¹⁷⁰ Vogel, Ezra F. (translated by Hironaka, Wakako), *Japan as Number One: Lessons for America*, TBS Britannica, 1979.

The mother of Yoko Hagiwara deserted her husband, when Yoko was still a child, running off with another man. Because she was the daughter of such a woman, she was harassed by her grandmother and other members of the family, so she presumably grew up timidly. Although she wanted to learn dancing or singing while a child, she was not allowed to do so, under the environment, so she led the life of a commonplace housewife. But on the occasion of winning the literary prize after writing a novel at age 37, her dreams, held while she was extremely young, were awakened, so to speak, and she began learning flamenco after she became 70.

The flamenco dance included a highlighted scene of lifting, in which she was raised by a young man in his 20s, and it was not only difficult but also a seriously dangerous action, requiring great courage in challenging it. Even so, Yoko Hagiwara challenged such a difficult action, displaying it at her announcement meeting. At that time, she was as old as 75. She is really a person we should regard as a model.

Previously, she appeared as a guest on a radio program, for which I served as master of ceremonies. At that time, she said, "Age has nothing to do with learning something. You can start at any age. The point is whether you have willingness to do it, and if you have it, anything can be overcome. The reason for being unable to do so is that you have the sentiment that it is too much or impossible."

She was exactly right. Irrespective of art or work, inability comes from the non-existence of an intention to do it. Uesugi Yozan¹⁷¹, who helped the Yonezawa clan from financial difficulties, once said, "Anything can be attained if really tried, so it is necessary to sincerely attempt anything. Inability is due to non-enforcement of efforts." And nothing can be unattainable, if there is a will to do it. And as I said before, the factor that induces us to do is knowledge and information. If, considering the persons who have actually overcome difficulties, or succeeded in their attempts, as models, and encouraging oneself, the yoke in the form of the concept of impossibility will be removed, with all possibilities becoming opened in front. And only in this case it is possible to enjoy life, isn't it? For that purpose, it is desired to remain vigorous and young until the time of actual death.

Artistic Activities Necessary for Business Administrators

By the way, I am an artist and at the same time a business administrator. There are many factors required of a business administrator, and I consider that possession of something surprising to employees may be a very important factor. Of course, continual posting of profits is the first task to be performed by a business administrator. It is also true, however, that a firm grip on the minds of employees is another important obligation on the part of a business administrator. For this purpose, it is necessary for a business administrator to refine his personality and create a self that continues to challenge new targets, with a view to becoming a model for employees.

For instance, people frequently refer to the Japan-China friendship, the Japanese-Australian friendship and the Japan-U.S. friendship. These mean that it is important to mutually

¹⁷¹ Yokoyama, Akio (edited by the Japan Historical Study Society), *Uesugi Yozan*, Yoshikawa Kobunkan (Jinbutsu Shosha), 1963.

exchange cultures and to enhance mutual understanding, but frankly speaking, I cannot become fond of such thinking. The reason is that these call for only simple exchanges, which involve little stimulation. Of course, exchanges may have meaning of their own, but I think exchanges only will not lead to improvement. There must be some surprise in addition to exchanges. It is not interesting or stimulating unless there are some surprising or unexpected factors making the people of other nations see previously unimagined actions on our part, and to be surprised at aspects of the Japanese people. Because such surprise becomes emotion, it is my opinion that, if we are to execute really significant exchanges, we should always give fresh surprises.

Not to mention international relations, I sense no meaning nor feel willingness to do anything, unless there are some surprising factors. In addition, I continually feel a sense of danger that I may have a deadlock as a business administrator someday, unless I keep demonstrating something surprising, or making others respectful, or giving others unexpected shocks. Accordingly, I believe it is meaningless for a nation and a nation, or a person and a person, to repeat exchanges in a similar manner. Even if such exchanges may have some meaning, no matter how much exchanges may be carried out, decline may inevitably occur sometime in the future, if factors like progress, improvement and challenging of new possibilities are lacking. As long as exchanges are conducted, it is desirable that surprises and emotions be continually involved, because such elements will prove to be factors ensuring the growth of each party. So, it is a welcome development if exchanges are mutually stimulating.

It is also my view that, similarly, business administrators must always give surprise or emotion to their employees. The surprise or emotion may be of any kind. It may be related to work, or sports apart from work. In my case, it happens to be artistic activities, but I think it is all right if the business administrator is particularly good at playing golf. At any rate, I feel that, unless I continue to indicate something surprising or moving to employees, while showing the image of maintaining efforts for some purposes, employees will not follow me with a sense of respect, and that my company will not be able to meet business chances or to present uniqueness or individuality of the company. Based on this feeling, I am pursuing artistic activities ahead of others.

It is all right even if employees do not understand this sentiment on my part, now. Someday, my spirit as a business administrator will be conveyed to employees through arts, and fine followers will eventually be reared as a result. This thinking is another reason for my engagement in artistic activities.

Management Is Art

In the case of starting some traditional Japanese art, such as Noh, tea ceremony, or flower arrangement, it is a general practice to start by joining some school, and to take lessons one by one from its basics. It may be all right to make ceremonial tea or arrange flowers in one's own fashion, but if it is a traditional art, we must follow the traditional manner passed down from olden times, and it is, in fact, faster. However, if practice based on the traditional manner is continued, something unable to be properly expressed exudes out from within, in due course. It is the brilliance of the person's individuality, but if techniques or the internal self rises to that level, sometimes his art may not be contained within the framework of tradition. As a result, a new school is produced. In other words, the person concerned starts up a separate school.

In the world of Noh, there is no room for the birth of a new school, since traditional techniques and schools are firmly established. In the realms of flower arrangement and Japanese-style dancing, creation of new schools may be almost daily occurrences. Heads of new schools are born one after another, and internal disputes arising from dissenter actions are not infrequently taken up by mass media. The problem of dissenter groups inevitably involves "worldly" aspects, so many people frown upon hearing it, but in consideration of the essence of arts, namely, display of individuality, the sentiment of wanting to get out of the traditional framework, and to establish another school, is understandable.

The typical world for self-initiatives is the field of painting, where there are no schools or heads of schools. The only existing thing is individuality, and if a painting has no individuality, it is not deemed worthy of evaluation. Although basics must be followed, paintings other than those that can be drawn only by the artist, or those that represent the character of the artist, are not accepted as pictures containing surprise or emotion. This is the world of paintings.

The world of haiku and tanka (31-syllabled Japanese poems) is almost the same, and products other than haiku that can be composed only by the artist, or other than haiku from which the character of the artist is exuded, cannot be recognized as haiku. So, haiku that does not contain something that represents the character of the artist is not real haiku, and any haiku, which is found anywhere or which can be composed by anyone, has no value at all. If an artist composes haiku or tanka as learned from his instructor continually, the artist cannot surpass the instructor. In that world, importance is attached to individuality more than anything else.

And if we consider enterprises, the situation is just the same. For enterprises, it is important to post profits, and if a business administrator can continue to record profits, he can be approved of as a business operator. Even so, unless the company manufactures products or provides service appearing to be characteristic of the company itself, the company cannot defeat its competitors. The reason Sony shows overwhelming force in electronic equipment industry circles is that it is continually developing products that have typical characteristics of Sony. Speaking of the Walkman, Play stations and Trinitron in the category of colour TV in the past, these products have displayed the characteristics of Sony to the utmost extent. All the more because of such individuality or identity, Sony shows its brilliance and the significance of its presence to the world even 50 years after its founding.

Then, what should we do to make an enterprise an individualist company like Sony? It is solely dependent on the ability or character of the business administrator. The reason Sony grew to its present position was that men of powerful character, such as Mamoru Ibuka and Akio Morita, drove that company forcibly. If they tackled management of the company aimlessly or without strong resolve, it is doubtful we would see the present-day Sony. Of course, employees must make their efforts, too, but the face of a company was the character of its business administrators. In this sense, the future for a company whose top management lacks brilliance of individuality, and therefore the management cannot stimulate employees, is not rosy. If one is a business administrator, therefore, he must continue dedicated efforts to think of ideas not devised by anyone else. The instant he neglects such efforts, his company will surely slip toward decline.

There are many haiku composers among Japanese business administrators, and the reason seems to lie in the aforementioned fact. For instance, the president of Skylark is so

enthusiastic about haiku composition as to be regarded as one of the three most capable haiku poets in the business world. That haiku can be learned at an old age may be another reason for the existence of many haiku poets among business circles. Even so, taking lessons only from a haiku instructor is not a sufficient reason for being a first-class haiku poet. As stated earlier, the haiku world is a realm where individuality is important. Of course, basic training is necessary. But learning it from an instructor is still at the level of initial training. In the field of art, individuality is also required with regard to haiku. Concerning opera, Noh, or calligraphy, individuality is eventually required. Based on the foundation of training under an instructor, painting, calligraphy, Japanese-style dancing and ceremonial tea, must show individual characteristics of the artist concerned; otherwise, no products will be regarded as art. Many business administrators who learn arts must be aimed at reaching that level. Otherwise, there may be no meaning in learning arts.

In defining master artists, those with balanced ability cannot be called master artists. To take the example of opera, master artists are those who have one or two excellent features; namely persons who, although their voices are not extremely beautiful, show superb actions, or great charms in their voices, or excellent timing in waiting, or speed in their movements. That is, master artists are characterized by being greatly individualistic, such that they show properties not possessed by others.

This is also true in the world of sumo wrestling. The master sumo wrestler is not a sumo wrestler who can perform any technique in a fairly good manner, such as Hokutenyu, a former "yokozuna." Like Akebono, any sumo wrestler who is unrivalled in "thrust" or some other technique is a real master sumo wrestler. Speaking of Akebono, he used this technique (thrust) in almost all matches. Even if it was known that he would use "thrust" in the bout, no one was able to stop him, when Akebono resorted to it. So, it is "yokozuna" and a master sumo wrestler that has such excellent technique and uses it almost in all cases. In this connection, Chiyonofuji, who was never defeated when he squarely tackled with the opponent and grasped the front part of the opponent's belt, may be termed the master among master sumo wrestlers.

A sumo wrestler having such excellent individuality rose to the rank of "yokozuna," ultimately. Accordingly, if a business administrator learns arts, he should also aim to attain this target, in my opinion. How should a business administrator learn arts, and display individuality based on these arts? In the case of haiku and paintings, it is said that, unless there are individualist brilliance and inspiration/ideas unique to the person concerned, what is produced is considered valueless as artistic works.

The situation is exactly the same with regard to corporate management. Consumers feel no attractiveness if the products, service and management are commonplace ones, and of course, the products will not sell well. As stated earlier, sales management, financial management and other basic techniques are necessary for corporate management, and it is a major premise to acquire these techniques, but to continue recording profits based on such a basis, the individual character of the business administrator cannot be ignored, after all. It is necessary for the individuality of the business administrator to be reflected in product manufacturing, service, dealing with customers and company buildings. Otherwise the business administrator will not be accepted by society as an excellent business administrator, excellent artist and great master.

There is such a background for the large relative number of unique and charming people among corporate managers. However, the situation is different for business administrators of major companies. It may be wrong to say that the matter of interest for these "salary man-type presidents" is only to serve safely until the end of their terms, but they characteristically lack uniqueness. The reasons for this are that the greatest duty of these salary man-type presidents is to secure harmony within their companies, and if they insist on their own opinions or display too much individuality, they may be criticized and replaced. For this reason, they have to become devoid of uniqueness, but apart from them, all owner business administrators, who started up their own companies, are full of uniqueness. In particular, business administrators who developed their businesses from small- or medium-sized enterprises to major companies are impressively individualistic. Richard Branson, of the Virgin Group; Akio Morita and Masao Oga, of Sony; Isao Okawa, of Sega Enterprise and Konosuke Matsushita of Matsushita Electric Industrial, all of whom were taken up in this article, were/are so individualistic that I become excited reading their biographies. Their uniqueness represents something similar to the attractiveness of "yokozuna" and master artists. Their attractiveness drew employees and formed the charms of their companies. It is often said that "management consists of personnel, and persons represent management." And the more the business administrator is unique, the more that uniqueness exudes naturally from management in general.

Therefore, management is eventually the same as arts. Enterprises are ultimately the same as arts. In carrying out corporate management, it is necessary to negotiate with tax offices, and to deal with banks. Without attractiveness stemming from managerial ability refined through such a basis, as well as the individuality of the business administrator, no employees or customers will follow the administrator, and his enterprise will be unable to survive. In this sense, corporate management is not different from arts. Corporate management is equal to arts.

Arts Are the Mother of Religion

Do you know that Onisaburo Deguchi, the founder of Omotokyo, a religious sect, said, "Arts are the mother of religion"¹⁷²? Generally, it is said that religion is the mother of arts, and religion is considered to give rise to arts. For instance, Raffaello depicted the images of Maria and Jesus Christ, as part of his religious expression. In this sense, certainly religion is a mother of arts. Nevertheless, Onisaburo Deguchi said, "No, arts yield a religious mind." The meaning of his statement is that the base of religion is formed by the soul and the mind, which are refined in their pursuit of arts, an ardent spirit progressing toward artistic works in a praying mind and a spirit that purely seeks beauty and artistic works, instead of position, honour and power, and which die for beauty and artistic works. Accordingly, he said, "Arts are the mother of religion."

In addition, the artistic nature, which is regarded as the mother of religion, is common to everyone. Followers of any religion must be moved when hearing beautiful music, and viewing beautiful paintings or beautiful dancing. Therefore, people who believe various kinds of religions must be able to understand one another and share emotion beyond differences

¹⁷² Deguchi, Onisaburo, *Three Mirrors – Collection of Sacred Words of Onisaburo Deguchi*, Yawata Shoten, 1999, p280,288.

of teaching principles, religious theories and interest/profit/loss through arts. So, Wanisaburo Deguchi said that really refined arts can be understood beyond differences of religions, races, national borders and generations, and that they are helpful in sharing emotions, as well as joys and happiness. Thus, he said that arts contain the ultimate purposes of religions, and that there are unlimited possibilities of arts in this point.

In consideration of this, is it possible to say that arts are a language commonly used throughout the world? Many people think that classical public entertainment and traditional public entertainment of a certain race cannot be easily understood by people of other races, but this view is not right. The reason for inability to understand is only a lack of knowledge, and so if basic knowledge about how to view Noh, how to see calligraphy and how to observe Japanese-style dancing is acquired, even a foreigner who did not know anything about such Japanese arts will be moved when they view Noh and see calligraphic letters. I staged Noh in New York several times, and each time, overwhelming applause did not stop easily, and in no case was there no response. So, if people learn the nature of some public entertainment, the method of enjoying it, and the style of beauty, each person will be moved. In particular, expressions by excellent performers appeal strongly to the souls of viewers, so there is no reason that traditional public entertainment inherent to a certain race cannot be understood by people of other races.

Of course, people without basic knowledge cannot understand ballet, or paintings, or opera. However, as soon as they learn how to view ballet, opera and paintings, they can feel how wonderful they are, and they will be moved. In addition, presentations by refined or excellent performers will cause great emotion in anyone, bringing about a meeting of soul to soul. This must also be the starting point of religion – a universal religion.

As seen above, arts are a common language in the world, so based on arts, it is possible for people from different places to become friends. For persons doing business, mutual understanding with their transaction partners is an important, essential issue, and using arts, it is possible to mutually understand people of any country, any race and any religion. All the more because of this, arts are matters based on which people can mutually understand and share emotions, joys and pleasure, irrespective of race, religion, politics and philosophy, not to mention John Lennon. In consideration of this, arts may be considered a starting point of religion.

Of course, religion may sometimes produce arts. However, when arts are pursued to their limits, they reach the original starting point of religion. Besides, the said starting point of religion is based on the universal religious nature, surpassing differences of religious sects. As such, refining souls through the intermediation of arts means returning to the starting point of religion, and at the same time relating to the essence of human beings, namely, life and happiness, in my opinion.

Based on such thought, I would like to challenge ceramic art in the future. In the case of Wanisaburo Deguchi, the related arts were paintings, calligraphy and ceramic art. Ultimately, he deeply entered the world of ceramic art, forming works in the unique field of "yowan" (brilliant pots). Yowan uses extremely psychedelic ceramics, using colours used by Pablo Picasso, and I feel that the use of such resolute colours during that period could not be enforced unless he reached a fairly high level. To challenge Wanisaburo, I intend to bake

"laughing pots" and "playing pots," and to arrange pampas grass or chrysanthemums in them, in autumn.

Also, fashion art is a field that can be a source of pleasure throughout the world. Because it is the conversion of European-style painting for me, I think it will not be so difficult. Because I mentioned it in Chapter 1, I will not repeat it here. At any rate, what I will pursue hereafter will be new arts that combined east and west. I would like to continue my challenges toward such possibilities.

Everything Originates from Religious Passion

As explained in the main text of this thesis, the foundation of all my endeavors, be it artistic, philanthropic, or even business, is rooted in Shintoism (Japanese native religion). Shintoism is centered on many gods, but these gods can be considered Shinto gods just as much as they can be considered the Christian God or the Islam Allah, all of which teach three main aspects: truth, virtue, and beauty. Accordingly, to recognize and accept god properly, one must learn truth, virtue and beauty equally, keeping a balance between them. Without this balance, one cannot achieve the correct attitude toward god, no matter how passionately one tries to believe.

This concept is taught in one of the Four Books of Confucius, the *Doctrine of the Mean*. "The *mean* is the foundation of all things under heaven. *Harmony* is the truth of all things under heaven. When the *mean* and *harmony* are achieved together, Heaven and Earth are in their proper positions, and all things are nurtured." In other words, the *Doctrine of the Mean* teaches us that if the *mean* is the foundation of all, and if truth can be brought to every corner of the world, then *harmony* can be achieved. If the *mean* and *harmony*, or essentials and derivations, work well together, then the universe will be nurtured.

To take this a little further, the Chinese character (referred to as "kanji") for the *mean* [中] can also signify "grasp the point" in Japanese. In other words, achieving the *mean* indicates a state in which one has grasped the point of all things. And therefore, according to Confucianism, achieving the *mean* is equivalent to achieving correctness [正]. In addition, "yoh" [庸] means the *ordinary* or everyday activities. In daily life, if one has to do things quickly, then do so. If one should take things slowly, then do so. If nothing should be done, then do nothing. Therefore, in a perfect universe, one who achieves the *mean* has naturally achieved the *ordinary*.

To go even deeper, the character [正] (correctness) is written by adding the kanji for "stop" (止) to the kanji for "one" (一). The line for "one" is "the point", and if we can grasp the point, without a doubt, we will be on the right path. Contradictorily, when the point of the *mean* cannot be grasped, there is unbalance and the point is no longer in the center. In this case, it goes without saying that our understanding of all things will be incorrect. As many of you may know, Chiang Kaishek's pen name is 中正 (Chung-Cheng). Buried among his many achievements is the teaching of this philosophy of correctness. He taught that everyday passion and benevolence is part and parcel to improving human nature.

When considering the existence of god through these Confucian teachings, we see that the way to understand and accept god correctly is to cultivate oneself openly with truth, virtue and beauty, and clearly grasp the point of the *mean* while learning the essence of the *mean* through balanced experiences. To elaborate, consider the science and scientific rationality that search for the truth, or the religions, ethics, and morals that reach for virtue, or the arts that yearn for beauty. Is not each one of these a combination of truth, virtue and beauty? For example, art without religion or logic lies in decadence, and Confucius teaches, "Music may be beautiful but not virtuous"¹⁷³. Perhaps he means that music may sound beautiful, yet if the persons who perform it are not virtuous, it does not achieve the *mean*. In any case, by learning truth, virtue and beauty in a balanced manner we can receive god in the proper way, and without this balance in science, religion or art, evil will certainly prevail.

For example, the contention between truth (science) and virtue (religion) is often a point of discussion. Theology is certainly one cause of this strife, where various religious doctrines and miracles present much conflict from the rational scientific standpoint. Another major cause is from the social organization of religions, which collaterally resulted in the problem of sectarianism.

First, among the religious doctrines and miracles that are actually regarded as theology, the most well known are found right in the Bible. Miracles such as Moses splitting the sea in two¹⁷⁴, Jesus walking on water¹⁷⁵, and Jesus changing water to wine¹⁷⁶ are just a few examples. The Bible tells of many miracles that cannot be accepted within the realm of modern science. It is often the unscientific quality of these miracles or doctrines that make scientists ignore or disregard religion as a whole.

One more cause of this strife is the sectarianism that resulted from various religions being organized into specific groups, the most prominent example being the contention between Catholic and Protestant religions. Even though 'the Jesus' that both groups believe in teaches, "Love thy enemies"¹⁷⁷, and "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also"¹⁷⁸, the organization of religion pushed sectarianism to the forefront and these groups began to call each other Satan and repeatedly carried out bloody warfare throughout history, such as the 30 Year War. There is no other way to see the organization of religion other than being contrary to Jesus' appeal for loving our enemies, which specifically conflicts with scientific rationalism. Recently, the hostility between Christian and Islamic religions has taken on an even graver aspect. The hostility is often forecasted as "the crash of civilization," but the bottom line is that this hostility is nothing more than religion against religion, sect against sect.

Then, can it be said that truth (science) and virtue (religion) cannot achieve harmony? I say this is not so at all. Of course, if doctrine or miracles or even sectarianism is pushed to the forefront, the same polarities and rivalries will undoubtedly appear. However, if I may

¹⁷³ *The Analects of Confucius*, Chapter 3, Verse 25.

¹⁷⁴ Exod 14.21

¹⁷⁵ Matt 14.25

¹⁷⁶ John 2.1-2.12

¹⁷⁷ Matt 5.44

¹⁷⁸ Matt 5.39

illuminate on my own experiences (described in the text for general cultural courses at Doshisha University, titled *The Study of Religion*, and also in Professor Yoshio Toda's *The Study of Religion* and Professor Hideo Iwamoto's *The Study of Religion*), I have found that "religious passion," or spirituality, is a universal concept and truth (science) and virtue (religion) can exist in harmony, and followers of various faiths can join hands with one and other.

One person who left grand footsteps founded in religious passion is the legendary Dr. Albert Schweitzer. As is widely known, Dr. Schweitzer¹⁷⁹ built hospitals in destitute and plague-ridden equatorial Africa, devoted his life to helping the black peoples of that area, and brought to the world great accomplishments that had never even been attempted before. If one is to try to understand why Dr. Schweitzer was able to achieve so much, one must accredit it all to his spirituality within his sense of responsibility as a medical doctor. When discussing Dr. Schweitzer's lifelong achievements, one cannot exclude his great religious passion.

Doctors Albert Einstein¹⁸⁰ and Albert Schweitzer were both men of science. However, they were both deeply spiritual and adored their god in many ways. Einstein the scientist gave us the ultimate scientific truth, the Theory of Relativity, yet Einstein the man of religion left us with such touching phrases as "I heard the music of the universe."

In any case, religious passion and science in no way conflict with each other. The real conflict is between intolerant religious dogmas. In fact, the creation of atomic weapons and nuclear bombs is due to the absence of universal spirituality. Religious dogma that is bound by antagonistic feuds or terrorism has developed out of skepticism and atheism.

Religious passion is not only a part of science, but of the arts as well. Of course, it is impossible to say that spirituality is completely essential to art. However, we should take a good look at artists such as Ambrogio Giotto¹⁸¹, the man who created the Renaissance style. He followed the doctrines of Saint Francesco of Assisi throughout his life, and when he first started painting objects and scenes realistically, he created an innovative, epochal style of painting. Vincent Van Gogh¹⁸² is another good example. Although Van Gogh, who was focusing on becoming a missionary, was a rather unsuccessful artist during his lifetime, he continually created paintings and portraits with the aim of having them appreciated even one hundred years later. When a collection of letters exchanged between Van Gogh and his brother was published and very well received, his paintings began to be recognized. Van Gogh influenced and changed the history of painting so much that he came to be known as "the father of modern painters." Surely these two men, who painted such great works of art, experienced god through the beauty of art itself. In fact, just as Van Gogh, many artists have written about such spiritual experiences in their lives.

Religious passion is also a key factor in welfare activities. Of course, there are many people involved in welfare activities that have no spirituality. However, with only ethics and morals

¹⁷⁹ Schweitzer, Albert, (noted by Saito, Mituru), *Schweitzer autobiography*, Kenkyusha-inc, 1981.

¹⁸⁰ Hermanns, William, (translated by Saika, Norihiko), *Einstein and the Poet*, Kousakusya, 2000.

¹⁸¹ Tuji, Shigehumi, *Giotto*, Shinchosya, 1976.

¹⁸² Gogh, Juan, (translated by Hazama, Inosuke), *Juan Gogh's letter*, Iwanami-Bunko, 1955.

as their driving force, as suggested by Bernard Krisher (former Newsweek Magazine Tokyo Bureau Chief), they don't last long in the field due to "welfare burnout." It seems that many people become excited by welfare work and, for a time, throw themselves into their responsibilities; yet soon they are affected by burnout and end up quitting.

On the other hand, people working in welfare that do have religious passion, no matter what religion they believe in, never seem to feel this "welfare burnout." These people know that all the welfare acts they perform are actually acts dedicated to god. The quintessential example of this is Mother Theresa¹⁸³. She devoted her life to the poor out of her rare and deep religious passion. In other words, when welfare activities and spirituality are linked tightly, life is brought to the project at hand and "welfare burnout" doesn't occur. This, I believe, is why true welfare activities continue on forever.

When assessing religion in this way, I recognized that the most important aspect of religion is not the doctrine itself, rather the "universal religious passion," which can be described as the "essence" that is born from doctrine and experience. If this religious passion is kept alive, if the purity of our belief in god is always heightened, then science, art and welfare will benefit from this passion and, as that sincere belief spreads internally, we will learn each of these areas equally and impartially, and this passion will spread to everything.

As our belief spreads internally, the level of purity of this belief intensifies, diversifying and spreading into various areas of life. To be specific, increasing the purity of one's belief can be seen as directing one's belief toward universal action and enlightenment, and at the same time nurturing a universally strong religious passion.

This concept is described in the *Doctrine of the Mean* (see above) as the eventual universalization of the foundations under heaven, the universalization, in other words, of the grass roots of everything under heaven. Furthermore, as religious passion becomes diversified, affecting many areas of life, we can achieve the harmony described in the *Doctrines*, and this will lead to the spread of truth under heaven.

I would like to take up the final element I mentioned as being affected by religious passion: business. The best textbook available on this topic, mentioned many times in this thesis, is by Kohnosuke Matsushita, the founder of Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., Ltd., one of the leading Japanese manufacturers of electrical appliances.

When Mr. Matsushita happened to visit the headquarters of Tenrikyo (a sect of Japanese Buddhism), he was shocked and delighted to see all of the Tenrikyo followers volunteering so happily and diligently. Not only was their attitude so pure and sincere, they seemed to be so much more hardworking and dedicated than his employees at Matsushita Electric. He wanted to know what was going on! Why were all these people so happy while working so hard? The conclusion Mr. Matsushita came to on his own was this: this must be how people work when they have a sense of mission, such as helping god or helping society, or when their sense of mission is founded in religious passion¹⁸⁴.

¹⁸³ Wada, Machiko, *Mother Teresa*, Shimizu-Shoin, 1994.

¹⁸⁴ Miyamoto, Naokazu, *The art of "thinking" - learn from Konosuke Matsushita*, Saizusya, 2000, □ 102 □ 110.

Naturally, for a man known as "the god of business," he could not help but apply what he saw at Tenrikyo headquarters to his own business. He returned to his office and appealed to his employees to ensure that each and every business activity of Matsushita is always beneficial to society.

At that time Matsushita Electric was manufacturing washers, vacuum cleaners, refrigerators, and other household products, based on their corporate mission called the "water works philosophy"¹⁸⁵. Life in Japan after World War II was very destitute, but Matsushita took on the mission of providing a huge flow of high quality home appliances at low prices, likened to the fast flow of water from a faucet, to help relieve Japanese homemakers from the harsh conditions of housework and bring a bit of luxury to daily life. However, influenced by the hints he gleaned from the Tenrikyo headquarters, Mr. Matsushita decided to take this a step further and designed the "250 Year Plan" in which Matsushita employees were assigned the mission of creating electric products for the good of the greater society. This mission was planted in the minds of each and every employee. As the well-known story goes, Mr. Matsushita's encouragements resulted in a drastic change in the employees; they began to show great enthusiasm when doing their morning radio-exercises, and indeed, began working with true joy.

It is said that even the current corporate atmosphere of Matsushita Electric can claim its roots to this period, and Matsushita still stands as a corporation that constantly works for the society; the goal being not simply earning profits, but also contributing to society. Matsushita is also enthusiastically involved in philanthropic activities, a popular form of social contribution in the U.S., as well as Mecenat activities. In fact, there are many young people who desire to work in such a company that benefits society and the human race, a place where their work can have real meaning. In this day and age, "a company's virtue becomes that company's true character" and their reputation will be based on this, and each company exists as an entity that shapes the moral character of society. Mr. Matsushita is certainly the driving factor for the concept and practice of American-style philanthropic activity in Japan.

It is in this manner that Matsushita transformed the religious passion that he witnessed at Tenrikyo into a social mission. This is yet another example of how spirituality exists even at the foundation of philanthropic and Mecenat activities (support for the arts and culture, particularly by corporations).

Indeed in my own case, my religious passions are strongly tied to my activities in the arts, welfare, and especially business. But the fact is, my spirituality is not only the foundation of my sense of social responsibility, but the continuous encouragement for my desires, actions, and feelings toward helping others.

As I stated above, religious passion not only blends well in many areas without conflict, it actually breathes life into these areas and inspires those involved. This is why I greatly value religious passion and why I never dwell on the differences in the dogma, doctrine, and theology of various religious sects. And this is why I would never impose any type of religion on any other person.

¹⁸⁵ Matsushita, Konosuke, *My Way of Life*, PHP-Bunko, 1986, p278□292.

Furthermore, I refrain from promoting any kind of mystical experience to others. As discussed in the body of this thesis, I have experienced uncountable mystical experiences, and indeed, still have many of these experiences in daily life. However, a mystical experience is something one feels in one's bones, something that only the receiver can fully understand. Within this context, a mystical experience can neither be negated nor affirmed as such; the best scientific stance is to leave it as it is. This is how I regard mysticism myself, and I have never intended to impose my mystical experiences on others, nor issue criticism concerning the experiences of others.

Certainly, religious passion or spirituality is a part of everything around us. It brings things to life and it gives life itself. It is from this universal spirituality that we are encouraged to become involved in activities for the arts and welfare, and it is from this universal spirituality that corporations feel eager to support philanthropic and Mesenat activities. This is my starting point and foundation as a person of religion and the starting point for any new and diverse activity I take upon myself. As long as I always keep this in mind, I have confidence that I can go beyond the walls of organized religion and cooperate with any person, work with any organization, regardless of nationality, religion, or sect, in order to participate in activities that are beneficial to society.

For example, in 1996 I was involved in establishing a 24-hour emergency medical facility (Sihanouk Hospital) that provides free treatment for all. This clinic was established in cooperation with our Shinto group and the Christian medical group called Hope. Yet the establishment of this clinic was made possible through mutual respect for religious passion, free of religious doctrine or scripture, to rescue the poorest people of Asia from sickness.

Of course universality exists within extremely pure spirituality and in the sense of mission, but what I really saw here was a new wave of world religion called the "interfaith movement."

Long before communication and transportation infrastructures were developed, people were apt to believe that their own religion was the only truth. However, most of these people knew nothing more than their own religion. For example, during the Edo Period in Japan, it appears that there were very few people even aware of the existence of Islam or Jewish religions. However, today's flood of information, thanks to advanced and far-reaching transportation and communication infrastructures, ensures that there is hardly a person alive who isn't aware of or hasn't been taught that all religions are equal, that love is essential, and that peace is the answer. It seems as though the concept of an interfaith movement, which aims to stop dwelling on the small differences between religious groups and get on with cooperation between one and other, has finally taken root. The new spirituality movement started in America, known as the "New Age" movement, is a part of this interfaith movement.

In order to further advance this interfaith movement, religious groups need to review their mutual similarities, as well as recognize their differences, in order to learn to respect each other, which requires extensive dialogue between the many factions. In addition, religious groups must cooperate in appealing for peace throughout the world by abolishing nuclear weapons, etc. Thus several key organizations have been created, including the Religious Summit Meeting and the WCRP (World Conference of Religion and Peace), as well as the United Nation's TOU (Temple of Understanding) and the IARF (International Association for Religious Freedom).

This kind of dialogue is extremely valuable in itself. However, I found the dialogues being carried out were only ending in dialogue, and I couldn't help but feel that we hadn't gotten beyond the dialogue itself. In an effort to go one step further, to push the stage of dialogue into the stage of action, we acted together to establish the previously mentioned hospital in Cambodia. Naturally, this was a joint effort between people of differing cultures and religions, presenting not just a few obstacles. But when it comes to the common desire to help poor and suffering people and save the lives of many dying people in the poorest countries, nationality no longer matters, nor does religion, religious faction, or whether you are part of the priesthood or only laity. If the sincere wish of all involved is for good deeds, for actions offering universal benevolence, surely universal spirituality becomes the driving force. As long as the religious passion or spirituality encourages a sense of social responsibility, I feel confident that there will always be welfare for all human life and true interfaith will prevail. Interfaith has already shown great success in many of the activities I have been involved in up to this point.

Religion, the arts, education, and business: over the years I have been involved in quite a diverse range of fields. But I believe that, by fostering my foundation of religious passion or spirituality and by continuously working hard to diversify this passion, all will become harmonized, all will progress and evolve. Finally, my desire is to pursue this concept in every direction of my life from here on, be it as a religious person, artist, welfare volunteer or philanthropist.

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APPENDIX 1: HANDA'S ARTISTIC ACTIVITIES

Music Profile <Opera, Vocal & Conducting>

Haruhisa Handa studied voice under Yoshinobu Kuribayashi, Director of the Nikikai Opera Association. He completed his graduate studies in voice at the Musashino Academia Musicae in 1997. He currently studies conducting under Kiyomasa Nagase and music theology with Tomiko Kojiba. His debut as an opera singer was in March 1997, when he took the role of Yasuyori in opera production "Shunkan". Since then, he has sung at many recitals domestically, and abroad; including at the Casals Hall and the Tokyo Metropolitan Opera City Concert Hall. His overseas recitals include performances at the Albert Hall in November 1994, "All the World's a Stage" at New York's Carnegie Hall in 1996, a New Year's Concert in London in 1997, Summer Concert in London in 1998 and Arts on the Edge Concert in Australia in 1998. In 1999, he led the Alps Choir at an audience with the Pope at the Vatican, where he performed his original compositions and traditional Japanese songs. Recently, in China he participated in the Great Wall concert organized by the Chinese Government's Ministry of Culture. He also performed at the opening of the 5th International Choir Competition where he conducted the orchestra during a performance of a piece he composed. He has composed works for the piano, pops, orchestral music and he also enjoys playing the violin and the piano. Some of his performances as a singer and conductor released have been released on CD and video.

Career in Opera

- 1997.Mar.21 Yasuyori in the Opera Shunkan
- 1997.Jun.28 Sarastro in the Opera The Magic Flute
- 1997.Oct.10 Bishamonten in the Oratorio Advent of the Seven Divinities of Good Luck

Career in Conducting

- 1994.Mar.26 The Beautiful Blue Danube, Radetzky March
- 1994.Jun.25 Dance of the Flame, Dance of the Sword, Dance of Yakuju
- 1994.Jul. 4 Symphony Nr. 40, Iwato hiraki March, Radetzki March
- 1994.Nov.18 The Beautiful Blue Danube
- 1994.Nov.27 Kuzuryu March, Pomp and Circumstance
- 1994.Dec.23 Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 in C minor

1994.Dec.25 Radetzki March

1995.Oct.10 The Hakone Shrine Symphony Space Ship Yamato

1996.Apr.26 In a Persian Market, Radetzki March

1996.Oct.10 The Hakone Shrine Symphony

1996.Nov.18 All the World's a Stage

1997.Jan.8 Pomp and Circumstance

1998.Jul.14 Radetzki March

2000.Mar.18 Haruhisa Handa 49th Birthday Concert

2000.Jul.22 The 5th China International Chorus Festival

2001.Oct.31 The Continent of Mu and The Naruto Strait with the Australian Ballet
Orchestra at the Sydney Opera House

2002.Jan.19 The Continent of mu with the London phylharmonic Orchestra

Career in Vocal performing

1991.Sep.22 Santa Lucia

1992.Jun.20 At the Sea of Kashima

1994.Mar.26 Song of Bisyamonten, Quizas□ Quizas□ Quizas, Love is a many splendored
thing

1994.Jul.4 When you wish upon a star

1994.Dec.23 Symphony No.9 in D minor, Op. 125 (Choral)

1995.Oct.10 Amazing Grace, Space Ship Yamato

1996.Apr.26 King David - on to the Promised Land, Kojo no Tsuki

1996.Oct.10 Dedicated to Athena, Air de toreador, Some Enchanted Evening from South
Pacific Sato no aki, Furusato, Momiji

1996.Nov.18 Some Enchanted Evening from SouthPacific at Carnegie Hall in N.Y.

1997.Apr.12 Some Enchanted Evening from South Pacific, Nemico della partria from
Andrea Chenier

1998.Jan.27 Piet rispetto, amore from Verdi's Macbeth

- 1998.Mar.23 O Sole Mio, Torna a Surriento, Morning Twilight, Deep within Your Heart
- 1998.Apr.3 Kojo-no-Tsuki
- 1998.Jul.14 Kojo-no-Tsuki, Natsu-no-Omoide, Soshun-Fu
- 1998.Aug.20 Non t'accostare urna Nemico della Patria from Giordano's Andrea Chénier
- 1999.July.27 Di Provenza il mar from Verdi's La Traviata, Natsu no omoide, Dany Boy
- 1999.Oct.6 Ave Maria, Maria on my mind, Yahweh's Shinso, Kojyo no tsuki, Hana, So syun fu, Kono michi at the Vatican
- 1999.Nov.17 Some Enchanted Evening from the musical South Pacific for encore
- 2000.Apr.8 Post Exhibition Cocktail Evening
- 2000.May.28 Concert at the Great Wall
- 2000.May.29 Concert at Tsinghua University
- 2000.May.30 Concert for the International Musicians of China and Overseas
- 2001.Jul.22 The 5th China International Chorus Festival
- 2001.Nov.14 Memorial Concert for the Inauguration of the Shunrai Elementary Schools
- 2001.Mar. 18 Haruhisa Handa 50th Birthday Concert "Yesterday" "Beauty and the Beast" "Catari, Catari"
- 2001.Oct. 23 5th Annual Performance by the Kanto Alps Choir "Dicitencello Vuie" "Spring in the Northern Country"
- 2001.Oct. 31 2001 Australian Singing Competition
- 2001.Nov. 29 The Concert of a Crane and a Koala at Casals Hall "I want to go to a distance" "Moon river" "First Love"
- 2001.Dec. 24 Christmas Concert "Volga Boatman" "On the Wings of Song" "Dicitencello Vuie"
- 2002.Jan. 19 New Year Concert "Star of Eve" "Chanpagne"

Noh performing Profile

Haruhisa Handa first studied Noh at Doshisha University's Hoshokai Noh Society under Nihei Kashiwabara and Takashi Tatsumi. Not only was he interested in Noh itself, but also in the instruments used by the Noh orchestra. He began studying Morita-ryu style of Japanese flute under Yoshitsugu Sadamitsu, Hiroyuki Terai, and Masaki Hoashi, the Issoryu style of flute under Jiro Fujita, and Kohryu style of the Japanese traditional small drum under Shingo Koh. His first Noh stage performance was in the play 'Tsurukame' in 1972. In 1996, he performed his first major role in a Noh play, 'Shojo,' followed by 'Ran' in 2000 and 'Shakkyo (Renjishi)' in 2001. Haruhisa Handa has contributed greatly to the dissemination of Noh both in Japan and overseas. He has conducted Noh performance tours in the United Kingdom, China, and in NYC, at places such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the United Nations. Last year, he organized an unprecedented Noh programme in Egypt staged in front of the Sphinx, in which he performed as a Noh lead for the 26th time. He is a teacher of Noh at the Hosho School, and leads the Toshu Hoshokai Noh troupe.

Career in Noh performing

- 1996.Jun.29 Noh, Shojo
- 1996.Nov.9 Noh, Hagoromo
- 1997.Mar.22 Noh, Chikubushima
- 1997.Jun.27 Noh, Xi Wang Mu
- 1997.Oct10 Noh, Hashi-Benkei
- 1998.Mar.13 Noh, Arashiyama
- 1998.Jun.6 Noh, Takasago
- 1998.Jun.26 Noh, Takasago
- 1998.Jul.29 Noh, Yoro
- 1998.Jul.30 Haruhisa Handa's Debut as an Issoryu-style Flute Player
- 1999.Mar.12 Noh, Shakkyo Shimai, Fuji Su-utai, Tsuru Kame, Hashibenkei
- 1999.Apr.25 Noh, Fuji
- 1999.May.30 Noh, Fuji
- 1999.Jun.1 Noh, Fuji at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY

1999.Jun.2 Noh, Fuji at the United Nations Plaza, NY

1999.Aug.3 Noh, Shakkyo Shimai, Tsurukame

1999.Sep.28 Noh, Iwafune

1999.Nov.11 Noh, Iwafune at the Handa Noh Theatre, London University

2000.April.16 Noh Midare

2000.Aug.31 Noh-Ballet Hagoromo

2000.Sep.5 Noh Takasago

2000.Sep.6 Noh Midare

2000.Oct.17 Noh Tsuchigumo at Government Plaza

2001.Jun.1 Noh, Shakkyo at Giza, Egypt

2001.Jul.27 Noh, Shakkyo at Kohri Nohgakudo

2001.Jul.28 Mai-Bayashi, Kuramatengu at Hosho Nohgakudo

2001.Jul.29 Noh, Shakkyo at Hosho Nohgakudo

2001.Sep.25 Noh, Shakkyo at Shiokaze Park, Odaiba, Tokyo

Performing Arts Profile <Ballet, Theatrical Performance>

Haruhisa Handa currently studies ballet under Saburo Yokose and Nobuya Nakajima. In 1993, he has performed with Maya Plisetskaya in a ballet he choreographed en-titled, 'Ameno Yasukawa no Ukehi', and recently, in August 2000, he performed in the Noh-Ballet 'Hagoromo'. Haruhisa Handa made his debut as an actor in March 1998 in the stage production of Kurama Tengu. He played the dual role of Emperor Meiji and Kurama-Tengu. Haruhisa Handa studies under Professor Wang Jin Lu of the Academy of Chinese Opera. He has performed in various productions, such as 'Xiyouyi, The Journey to India', in October 1999, 'Kokyo Zoshu' in November 1999 and 'Reunion of the ancient castle' in July 2000.

Career in Performing Arts

- 1992.Dec.30 Yamato-wa-Kunino-Mahoroba
- 1993.Dec.28 Harmony at the Serene Celestial River
- 1994.Mar.26 Raiten from Seven Divinities of Good Luck Touring in Vienna
- 1994.July. 4 French Can Can
- 1996.Jun.29 Nymphs at the Water's Edge
- 1997.Mar.21 Reimei-Morning Twilight
- 1997.Jun.28 Kengen-The Incarnation
- 1998.Mar.22 Plays two roles in The Saga of Kurama Tengu as Kurama Tengu and Emperor Meiji
- 1999.Apr.25 Nihon Sosei-The Rebirth of Japan
- 1999.May.1 Nihon Sosei-The Rebirth of Japan
- 1999.Oct.26 Plays three roles in Xiyouji as Emperor of Tang, Ground Spider and Shakamuni
- 1999.Dec.23 Plays role in Hong qiao zeng zhu as Er lang shen
- 2000.Aug 31 Noh-Ballet Hagoromo

Artistic Profile

Haruhisa Handa is a painter with a broad knowledge of various styles of painting. He has studied Japanese style painting(Nihonga), under Yaumichi Inukai, oil painting under Matsushita and ink painting(Suibokuga) under Bakushu Yasunaga. Last year, two of Fukami's oil paintings were chosen and printed in the Complete Collection of Selected Art Works for the Year 2000, published by Yubido Publishing, Japan. He has also entered a designer's contest for clothing held by Japan Designer's Association and came second out of the 5000 entries.

His Art Publications include: Haruhisa Handa Art Book by Kyuryudo Publishing, Haruhisa Handa's World of Japanese Paintings and Haruhisa Handa's World of Calligraphy by Tachibana Publishing.

Haruhisa Handa is also active as Committee President and adjudicator for Japan's National High School Art Festival.

Haruhisa Handa's art works have been displayed in the following exhibitions in Japan and abroad.

Career in Arts

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| 1999 & 2000 | Jeju International Arts Exhibition at Jeju Do, Republic of Korea |
| 1999 | BESETO Art Exhibition in Tokyo |
| 1999 | Exhibition at the Grant Gallery, SOHO |
| 2000 | The First Exhibition of Paintings and Calligraphy by Haruhisa Handa at the Forbidden City, China (organized by the Chinese Government's Ministry of Culture) |
| 2000 | Charity Art Exhibition "Two Artists, One Vision", Tokyo |
| 2000 | BESETO Art Exhibition, Beijing |
| 2001 | Arts Exchange Exhibition by selected artists of Japan and Korea |
| 2001 | Joint Exhibition with the Chinese portrait artist Yuan Xikun, in Beijing |

Calligraphic Arts Profile

Haruhisa Handa is the President of Toshu Calligraphy Research Centre and a Master of Japanese calligraphy.(Shodo)

His calligraphy works are include in publications such as : "Toshu Fukami Art Book" by Kyuryudo Publishing, "Toshu Fukami's World of Japanese Paintings" and "Toshu Fukami's World of Calligraphy" by Tachibana Publishing.

Haruhisa Handa is also active as Committee President and adjudicator for Japan's National High School Art Festival.

Haruhisa Handa's art works have been displayed in the following exhibitions in Japan and abroad.

Career in Calligraphic Arts

- 1999 & 2000 Jeju International Arts Exhibition at Jeju Do, Republic of Korea
- 1999 BESETO Art Exhibition in Tokyo
- 1999 & 2000 Haruhisa Handa Calligraphic Exhibition at an Exhibition of the Art of Calligraphy by the Calligraphers Guild of Western Australia
- 1999 Exhibition at the Grant Gallery, SOHO
- 2000 The First Exhibition of Paintings and Calligraphy by Haruhisa Handa at the Forbidden City, China (organized by the Chinese Government's Ministry of Culture)
- 2000 Charity Art Exhibition "Two Artists, One Vision", Tokyo
- 2000 BESETO Art Exhibition, Beijing
- 2001 Arts Exchange Exhibition by selected artists of Japan and Korea
- 2001 Joint Exhibition with the Chinese portrait artist Yuan Xikun, in Beijing
- 2001 Modern Masterpieces of Japanese Calligraphy and the Heisei Satake Edition of the Sanjurokkasen. (Fukami's calligraphic work that was exhibited is now held in the British Library, UK)

Flower Arrangement Profile

Haruhisa Handa is recognized as a Master of the Saga Goryu School of Japanese flower arranging. Currently, he continues his studies under Gaoh Mizuno.

In 1999, he produced and directed a stage performance which harmoniously combined three different forms of art; Noh, Ballet and Japanese flower arranging, entitled *An Evening of Noh-Ballet and Blooming Wisteria*. In the same year, he again created a performance in which Ballet and Japanese flower arranging were combined. Last year, he held an art exhibition of paintings and Japanese flower arranging in Tokyo, Japan.

Career in Flower Arrangements

- 1999 *An Evening of Blooming Wisteria Noh Ballet* at the Nihon Seinenkan Hall, Tokyo
- 1999 *Nihon Sosei* □ *The Rebirth of Japan* at Kumano Hongu Taisha
- 2001 *Art Exhibition of Paintings and Japanese Flower Arranging*, Tokyo, Japan

Tea Ceremony Master Profile

Haruhisa Handa is a master of Japanese tea ceremony(Sado) of the Sihnyuha school. He began his studies of tea ceremony at the Ura Senke School when he was 20, joined the Japan tea Association and since 35 is a member of the Edo Senke Shinryu School. To add to the traditional tea ceremony that he holds every year, in 2002, he will produce a new type of tea ceremony which will combine modern art with tea ceremony. For the occasion, Haruhisa Handa has created his own hand made tools which include not only the ceramic bowl(chawan) from which the tea is drunk, but also all other tools such as the tea (chasaku), kaki(flowers bowl), kakejiku(scrawl), tatami(straw mattress), green tea powder(matcha) and kashi(Japanese sweets).

Hastugama Tea Ceremony

Jan. 1986	Nishiogi, Tokyo
Jan. 1987	Nishiogi, Tokyo
Jan. 1988	Yoga, Tokyo
Jan. 11, 1989	Ohmiya Hachiman
Jan. 15, 1990	Ohmiya Hachiman
Jan. 15, 1991	Ohmiya Hachiman
Jan. 15, 1992	Ohmiya Hachiman
Jan. 15, 1993	Ohito - cho, Shizuoka
Jan. 15, 1994	Ohito - cho, Shizuoka
Jan. 15, 1995	Ohito - cho, Shizuoka
Jan. 15, 1996	Ohito - cho, Shizuoka
Jan. 15, 1997	Ohito - cho, Shizuoka
Jan. 15, 1998	Ohito - cho, Shizuoka
Jan. 15, 1999	Ohito - cho, Shizuoka
Jan. 15, 2000	Ohito - cho, Shizuoka
Jan. 15, 2001	Ohito - cho, Shizuoka
Jan. 15, 2002	Ohito - cho, Shizuoka

APPENDIX 2: LIST OF SUBMITTED WORKS

Appendix 2

List of submitted works

Photo book	1	Opera <i>Shunka</i> , Noh Chikubushima
	2	Opera <i>Magic Flute</i> , Noh Seiobo
	3	<i>Yugen-no-bi</i> (photo book of Noh plays)
	4	<i>Kareinaru-mai</i> (photo book of ballet)
	5	<i>Kurama-tengu</i> (photo book of <i>The Saga of Kurama</i>)

Art book	1	Toshu Fukami Art Works 1 (yellow)
	2	Toshu Fukami Art Works 2 (red)
	3	Toshu Fukami Calligraphy Works
	4	Toshu Fukami World of Japanese Ink Paintings

CD	1	The songs of Japan
	2	Starlight in Perth
	3	Toshu Fukami piano collection 1
	4	Toshu Fukami piano collection 2
	5	Toshu Fukami piano collection 3
	6	Flute Beckoning the Gods
	7	Drums Beckoning Healing Energy
	8	Mon Ami

Video	1	Opera <i>Shunkan</i>
	2	Opera <i>Magic Flute</i>
	3	Midsummer Night Illusion
	4	Around the World (Royal Albert Hall)
	5	All the World's a Stage (Carnegie Hall)
	6	<i>The Saga of Kurama</i>
	7	<i>Xiyouji, Journey to India</i>
	8	<i>Harmony at the Serene Celestial River</i>
	9	Noh-Ballet <i>Hagoromo</i>
	10	Noh <i>Fuji</i> (at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY)
	11	Sphinx Takigi Noh (<i>Syakkyo</i>)
	12	Toshu Fukami Fashion Show
	13	2001 Australian Singing Competition
	14	The Concert of a Crane and a Koala (with Gregory Yurisich)
	15	Peking Opera <i>Hanjinkou</i>

Musical score	1	Toshu Fukami piano collection
	2	Toshu Fukami original scores 1
	3	Toshu Fukami original scores 2

Poetical Work	1	Conversation with God
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Booklet	1	Toshu Fukami Artistic Activities 1990-2000
	2	Toshu Fukami Artistic Activities 2001
	3	Charitable Activities
	4	Business & Creativity (B.C. CONSULTING)